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HOLYLAND



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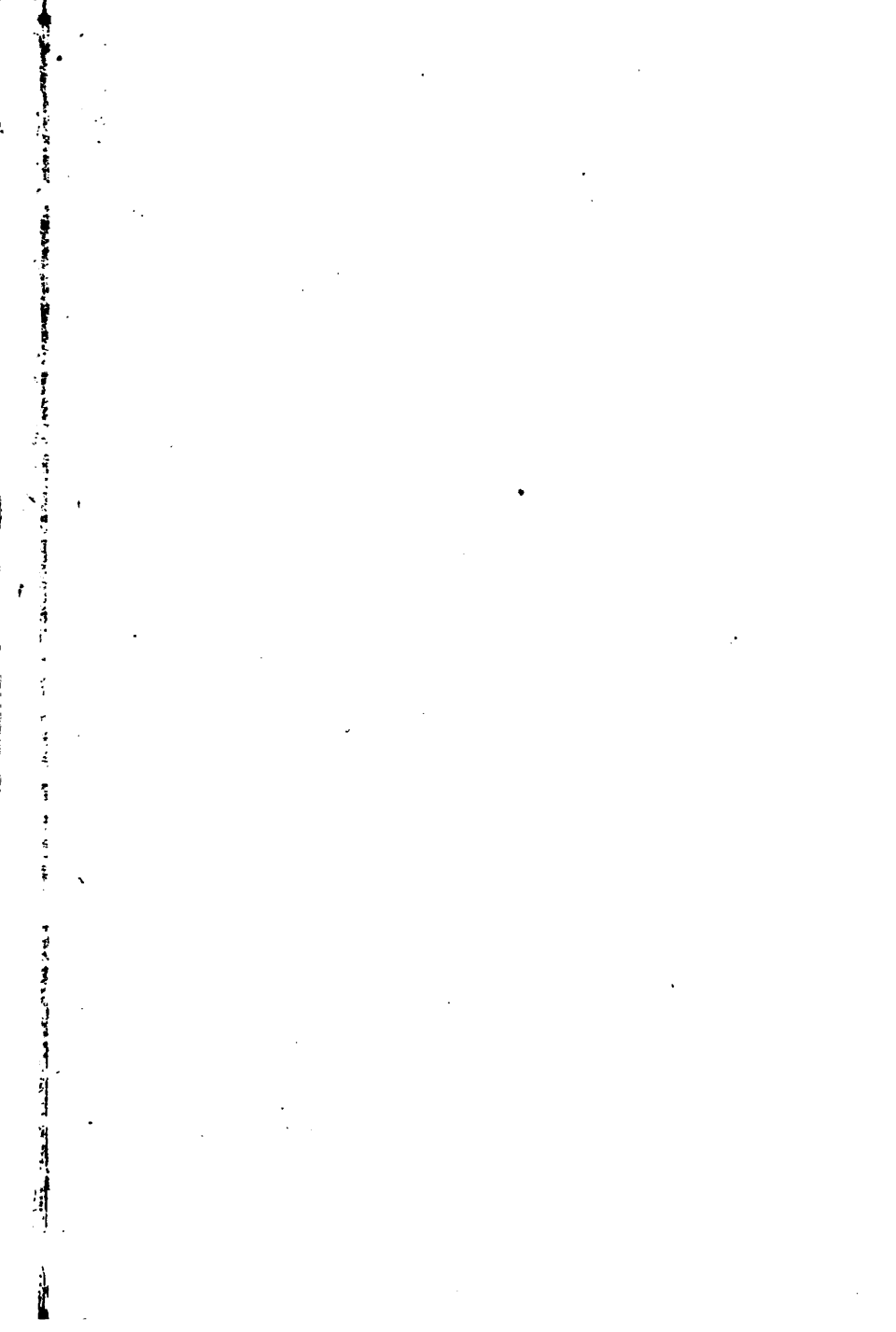
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HOLYLAND

JORN UHL

BY

GUSTAV FRENSSSEN

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HOLYLAND

Exclusive Authorized Translation of
"Hilgenlei"

By GUSTAV FRENSSEN

Author of "Jörn Uhl"

Translated from the German

BY

MARY AGNES HAMILTON



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CHIEF CHARACTERS

Tjark Dusenschön — Left-handed descendant of a prince's son,
brought up by his grandmother,

Stiena Dusenschön.

Kai Jans — Eldest son of

Thomas Jans — A navvy, formerly on the lightship.

Pe Ontjes Lau — Son of the harbourmaster; marries

Anna Boje — Eldest daughter of

William Boje — Teacher, and

Hella — His wife.

Pete and Hett — Anna's brothers.

Heinke — Her sister (eight years younger).

Kassen Wedderkopp — An old civil servant living in Hilligenlei;
formerly a journalist.

Heine Wulk — Editor of the newspaper.

Daniel Peters — Mayor of the town.

Peter Volquardsen — A young teacher at the grammar school; mar-
ries Heinke.

HOLYLAND

CHAPTER I.

HALF asleep and dissatisfied, many people merely drag themselves through life; they never really live; they are a burden to those about them. Who cares for their story?

There are others whose childish eyes are full of wonder, who dimly feel, as boys, that great things are reserved for them, and go out into life with unclouded spirits. It would be worth while to tell their story. Never mind; it does not come to much, after all. What do these people make of their lives? They devote themselves to the pursuit of wealth and outward honour and such illusions; they run, they stumble, they fail to find what they seek, and so stumble into their graves. It is a weariness to write their story; one's hair grows grey in the telling. Not that we expect the superhuman — that people should set out to find a kingly crown — no; let them only, while pursuing their illusions, have some hope of finding in the next field a troop of angels instead of a herd of asses: some vague idea that there, under the oak tree at the next turn of the road, the Eternal may be standing with the thousand riddles of the world in His sacred hands, ready to tell them the answer to some. We do ask this; without this a man is incomplete.

And so, my troubled, courageous soul, tell the story of one who sought for holiness full of unrest, full of hope.

With the coming of the dusk the storm cast itself more fiercely upon the sea, striking with its strength the grey waste of desolate waters far and wide. From Iceland to the Scotch

coast, and from there right over to Norway, the grey, foaming waves came heavily on a hundred miles across, with endless roar and rush, on to the Holstein coast. There in the dread darkness at the entrance of the bay lay the squat red lightship swinging heavily backwards and forwards on its chain, swaying its radiant lamp. Over the blackness of the angry ocean its light flickered restlessly. The wind tore and whistled in the rigging. Howling and swelling storm and sea rushed past the lightship, roared into the wide, grey bay, forced their way up the narrow harbour into the little town called Hilligenlei. Then indeed the storm, as if exulting in its freedom from the sea, which had hung at its heels all the way from Iceland, dashed itself, wild and surging, against the first obstacle it met, a long, low, thatched roof standing high upon the beach at the top of the harbour stream. It dashed against the roof and struck the five chimneys with might and main; it leapt round the house and tore at the five doors and at the windows.

In the furthest room sat Rieke Thomson, the midwife, in her comfortable armchair: feet on the foot-warmer, hands resting on her portly body, coffee-pot ready on the table, she was waiting peacefully. She sat there looking down the street, only turning her big head from time to time to look through a little square window that she herself had had made at the side, across the bay to see whether there were any sign from Friestadt. It was the time-honoured duty of the Friestadt schoolmaster, who lived on the dyke opposite, to put a white cloth on the dark, thatched roof in the day-time and a light in the school-room window at night that could be seen from Hilligenlei whenever a woman was in labour. This stormy evening, however, it was only the force of habit that made her turn her heavy head. As far as any news she had heard, there could be no message from Friestadt. It was across to the house of Harbourmaster Lau that she looked. His wife's time must come to-night, she thought. But the harbour-master's door remained tight shut.

Then she began to be sorry for herself, a lonely, neglected female, although in the course of the day she had had seven visitors. Six old women had come to gossip. One young one wanted to know from the cards when she should be a mother again. Tired of being alone, she bent indolently to

pick up the wooden shoe that lay by the fireside, and threw it, with a slow swing of her arm, against the door. In came old Hule Beiderwand, who lived in the next room. In spite of his sixty years, he carried himself as upright as in his youth, when he was mounted orderly between Kiel and Gottorp; but his straight bearing was not only due to the proud build of his body; far more to the lovely light that shone within his soul.

Round about the bay of Hilligenlei, at the foot and under the shade of the great sea dyke, clustered many little houses, in which dwelt labourers, fishermen, and small farmers. These people, living extraordinarily lonely lives in their dark, low-roofed rooms, far away from the church, had from long time past brooded over a peculiar faith. They called themselves "Holyland men," and lived in the belief that the little town of Hilligenlei and the country round the bay would be one day a real Hilligenlei, i. e., Holyland. They looked for the Kingdom of God in the bay. The secret leader, and, indeed, the last of the faithful—for the faith was dying out—was Hule Beiderwand. In his life he had watched many nights by sick-beds, and thus acquired the habit of standing by the window and looking out into the night. Now, with his slow, stiff gait, he went to the little window that looked out over the bay. Lost in thought, he gazed out into the darkness and listened to the song of the storm.

"It's too bad," said Rieke, "that I have got to sit here like this, a lonely old woman like me. And if a man does come he stands there mum like a stock!"

"There is a light," said the old man.

"What?" she cried, starting up in her chair, and looking out. There in the distance the clear light shone calm and distinct. "In Friestadt! What is it, Hule?"

"I think I know," said the old man. "A fortnight ago Lisa Dusenschön was here—in the dusk, like this."

Rieke, with her hands on her knees, looked at Hule out of her big, round eyes. "Lisa Dusenschön? That's Stiena's daughter, who lives near us in the long house? in service with the Reimars in Friestadt?"

"If you know no other woman in Friestadt for whom the light has been set out, it is Lisa. She asked for her mother: she was away; then for you, and you weren't there either;

then she went away again. Now that I see the light I imagine that she had something important to say."

"Well," said Rieke, pressing her hands against the arms of her chair as if to get up, "then I must go to Friestadt in all this weather!"

She had not yet risen, when the storm seized the outer door and dashed it against the wall. There on the threshold stood Lisa, strong and broad, her ruddy fair hair hanging wet about her ears, deathly exhaustion on her white face, horror in her deep-set eyes.

"The farmer has turned me out; my mother is not at home."

Rieke hobbled out of the chair and took hold of her, led her up three steps to the inner room, and laid her down on the bed.

"Well, I never," she said. "Never in my life have I had such a fright!"

"Rieke, I lay down in the mud fifty times. I doubled up like a worm. I wanted to take hold, but I couldn't." She breathed deep. "Oh, now it is easier. Hasn't mother come yet?"

"She will be here directly. Hark! that's the door. Yes, here she is." Stiena Dusenschön was dressed in the attire she always donned for visiting. On her head was the dingy-black state bonnet, round her thin shoulders the old-fashioned black mantle with bead fringe that the clergyman's wife had given her. Her long bonnet strings hanging down in front trembled, and the bead fringe jumped up and down in her excitement. She passed her hands over her head again and again in a troubled manner. "Oh, my child, my child," she cried, "why have you done this?"

"Woman," said Rieke, "do not for any sake get into a state. Were you any better in your young days? Why has she done it? Either because some one got the better of her or because her own nature drove her to it. That's why."

Stiena had sat down at the edge of the bed gasping for breath. "My child, my child, who is the father? Only tell your old mother who the father is."

"Stop your questions," said Rieke. "Go and fetch little Tina Rauh to help us and make some coffee. We shall need half the night for this."

Stiena was a trifle offended. However, she got up from the bed, and, going out, returned with the little Rauh girl, one of the family living in the harbour street, all of whom have curly fair hair and somewhat wandering wits. Then she went straight to her daughter's bed. She lay groaning heavily, her distorted face against the coverlet. "Oh, my child, tell me; is it some rich farmer's son? or a strange gentleman? or, oh! is it a nobleman?"

"A nobleman, indeed!" said Rieke, shaking her great, round head. "Be glad if it's a good, honest fellow who will acknowledge mother and child. Come, we'll have a cosy cup of coffee. It's not a dream, is it now, that you're to be a grandmother to-day? Come, sit down."

Just as Tina lifted up the can to pour out, Lisa gave a loud cry from the inner room. The girl put the can noisily down on the table, and was on the point of running away.

"Oh, dear. I must run home to mother!"

Rieke, however, took hold of her by the neck. "You stay here at the table, and mind you don't stir. Come, Stiena," and they went in to help the moaning woman.

The little girl sat huddled up at the table as if she were fastened there. When Lisa cried out she drove both hands into her tousled hair; when the cry was louder she held her ears. When it got quieter within she cautiously straightened out her neck and laughed. So she stayed for two long hours, till a soft, distant weeping came, as if from far away, from the inner room. Then she bowed her head on the table and wept miserably.

"Well, that really breaks one's back," said Rieke, coming down into the room. "Come, let's have our coffee." She sat down heavily in the big armchair and looked at Tina. "You go now and sit up there and listen if Lisa is asleep or calls out or anything, and don't stir from there. Come now, Stiena, sit down and make yourself cosy."

"Who can the father be?" said Stiena, smiling at her happy thoughts, and turning about on her chair as if to the strains of a slow waltz. "Assuredly a farmer's son, most assuredly; and, better still — and, Rieke, think of its being a boy. That makes me so awfully happy. The Dusen-schöns have been girls for a hundred years back, but now — it's a boy!"

"You really might tell me," said Rieke Thomson, filling her cup, "the true story of your Dusenschöns; but mind you don't exaggerate; in my old age I don't want any lies told me. Drink your coffee."

Stiena drank, and, putting down her cup, swayed for awhile to the joyous music within her, with a sweet, thoughtful smile, her bonnet strings swaying and the bead fringe waving this way and that. "Ah," she said, "that is a story, indeed. Look here. It began a hundred years ago or more. Then my great grandfather was mayor here in Hilligenlei and called von Dusenschön. He lived quite alone with his six daughters. He did not allow the young men of the town to come near them, for he hoped that noblemen and officers would come and fetch them away one after the other, for they were all very beautiful. He did not trouble over their growing older and older till the two eldest were really withered. He was a hard man, and it never entered his head that every created thing will have its rights. Well, one fine day he heard that the king's son was passing through Hilligenlei *incognito*, with only a few companions, and wanted to spend the night at his house, he being mayor. So he informed his daughters.

Little Tina craned her neck to see mother and child. In doing so she moved the door, which gave a short, sharp creak. Rieke Thomson looked up. "Does Lisa want anything?"

"No," said the little girl; "she looks as red as an apple on a tree."

"We're just coming," said Stiena, nodding lovingly towards the bedroom. "One more cup, please, Rieke."

"There you are, Stiena. Go on with your story."

"When the mayor's three elder daughters were going to bed that night the eldest said that the visit was a great honour, the second that they must put out the damask table linen, and the third that she should put on her blue silk gown. But the three younger sisters reflected on the meaning of love. As a matter of fact, they did that every evening, but more so this evening than usual. The eldest combed her hair and drew up her full figure in front of the mirror and thought, 'He is eight-and-twenty and handsome. How stupid that a king's son may only woo a king's daughter.' The

second sat on the edge of her bed in her wide, white nightgown, and bent down her head till she could see the whole of her beautiful body from neck to knee, and thought, should she be wrinkled and spotty and shrunk like her eldest sister in ten years' time? She shuddered at the thought, and hardly knew what to think of the world. So she lay down and slept. The third, the youngest of all, was Susie, and she was one-and-twenty. She lay full length on her back, her two hands in her thick, golden-brown hair, in bitter trouble. In the summer she had gone over a great deal to the old clergyman's wife, who lived near the churchyard. There she had lain on the grass in the garden under a hazel bush with the son, a student, while he whistled like a chaffinch and told her how the hazel blossomed and made a wedding-feast, and he kissed her and went away. Since then she had silently fought a fierce fight against God and man, thinking, with bitter resentment in her heart, 'The Holy Trinity and the world are wronging me hideously.' And this evening her misery was acute, for her father had privately said to her, 'I want the prince to remember our house with particular pleasure so that by his help I may get promotion to the capital and a better post. I know he likes beautiful, clever women. You are the cleverest and the most beautiful. Tomorrow evening you shall sit by him.' Therefore, as she lay full length in bed she resolved, 'If he chooses he shall tell me all the things I don't know and want to know.'

Tina craned her neck to see the mother and child. In doing so she moved the door, and it gave a short, sharp creak.

Rieke looked up. "Does Lisa want anything?"

"No," said the girl, "but she's as white as chalk."

"We're just coming," said Stiena, nodding her head lovingly towards the bedroom. "I'll get to the end quickly. One more cup, please, Rieke."

Rieke poured it out. Hule Beiderwand came in again and took up his usual position at the window without saying anything. "Drink it off and go on with your story."

"The next day the prince came, and in the evening he sat next to Susie and found her charming. As sure as she laughed at what he said he bowed and looked quite serious. As sure as she was quiet and serious he laughed and gave her

more wine. When they got up he gave her his hand and whispered a few words. Her sisters thought it some compliment, but he had said a bad word to her. When all in the house were gone to bed she slipped secretly out of her room and downstairs. The next morning the eldest sister found her sitting in the arbour, her hands pressed together on her lap, staring at the ground in front of her. The prince rode away. She waited for a letter or a message, but none came. Then she advised her two younger sisters to rebel against their father and marry some simple tradesman. She went secretly to Hamburg, where she lived with simple folk, and made a hard living by sewing, and gave birth to a girl. For eight or nine years she lived with these people, some say quietly and alone, happy with her little girl; others say visited from time to time by officers. Anyhow, she died young. The ten-year-old girl was sent first to Hilligenlei, but by that time the mayor was dead. They sent her to the five sisters, but they had entered a superior cloister, where they made crochet table-covers. Their sister's child horrified them. Comforted by the parson, they despatched her back to Hilligenlei. She grew up there among simple folk, and developed uncommon intelligence. Sometimes she was proud and reserved, then suddenly feverishly gay. When she was twenty she went the same way as her mother. Her daughter, my mother, bore me out of wedlock, and I was not married myself."

The little girl, heavy with sleep, stirred now that the story was at an end. The door gave a sharp creak. Rieke moved her clumsy body. "Does Lisa want anything?"

"No. She is lying quite still, as yellow as wax."

Then Rieke, supporting her hands on the arms of her chair, got slowly on to her legs and went thoughtfully up into the bedroom, holding on to the sides of the door.

Stiena remained at the table nodding her head and smiling sweetly, listening to some joyous music. The bead fringe rattled gently, and the strings swayed elegantly. So she sat, dreaming, "It's a nobleman; I'm sure of it."

Hule stood by the window gazing out into the stormy night. After a while Rieke came down the stairs with the child in her arms, and sat down again, breathing hard, in

her big chair by the table, saying, in a choked voice, "Lisa is dead."

Stiena uttered a piercing yell, calling God and men to witness.

Hule had turned away from the window and gone up into the bedroom. Coming down again stiffly after a short absence he said, shaking his head, "What a misfortune."

Rieke pushed back her cup sharply. "Be quiet," she said; "I don't want to hear another word."

But the old man was not to be balked. "What a mass of sin have we here. The king's son and the mayor and all those who have committed outrage, the farmer who drove her away, and you two, who paid no heed to her! This town is called Hilligenlei, Holyland, but never have I seen a man here free of sin and sorrow."

Rieke struck the table sharply, and said, in a breaking voice, "I won't hear it. Christ our Lord redeemed us with His blood. That I have learnt, and that I stand by."

"What then?" said the old man. "Is there a single man in Hilligenlei or along the dyke who is redeemed, who is holy? Think of all the lazy, thoughtless, stupid people in the town. But, I say unto you, one day a brave man will come who will rise up like a judge in Israel and bow the whole land beneath his sword until it is holy in deed as in name."

At this moment Tina shot in at the door, and, throwing a postcard on the table, was off again. "The postman brought it to us because you weren't at home, Stiena."

Stiena snatched up the card, wiping the tears from her eyes to read the address. "To Stiena Dusenschön in Hilligenlei." When she turned it over it was painted with bright flowers. In the little fore space were the words, "You have no idea of it"—at that time a slang phrase.

"Oh, look here," she said, wiping away her tears, "look! this is from him. What a pretty card. I have no idea—no idea of what? that he is a rich man—no. I have no idea. Rieke, he's a nobleman. He'll come in his carriage and fetch away the child, and me too."

Rieke took the card and looked at it and said, "It's a pretty card, and the writing is good, but it would be better if there were a name on it."

"Who or what his father is does not matter in the least," said the old man. "What does matter is that he should help to make this land, this Hilligenlei, more holy, that's it."

"Always at that," said Rieke, crossly. "I say, with a father who writes a postcard like that, and a Dusenschön for his mother, he will be something, that's certain. Come, Stiena, let's consult the cards. Good heavens, what one has to go through in this life! They're on the top shelf."

"Oh, yes," said Stiena, getting up so quickly that the bonnet strings swayed and the bead fringe rose in waves. "Consult the cards. Lord, how I wonder!"

Next morning Rieke was once more sitting in her big armchair by the hearth with her foot-warmer smoking a little, and she looked eagerly across to the harbourmaster's house, expecting her summons to come at last. So she waited for four days, visited meantime by some twenty women, old and young, who drank coffee with her. She complained of her loneliness, and began to be secretly angry with the child. On the morning of the fifth day, when she had just taken up her usual position on the throne, Harbourmaster Lau came across the street, burst open a window with his great paw so that the fastening jumped off, and said, in his calm, comfortable way, "The boy arrived last night."

She threw herself stiffly up and regarded him sharply out of her round eyes. "Why didn't you send for me?"

"Well," said Lau, "the boy said it wasn't necessary; he could help himself. There are the fifteen pence," and he counted the midwife's fee on to the window-sill.

"That boy will be a good-for-nothing weathercock, I can tell you that."

The big harbourmaster laughed in his fair beard and went off. Then Rieke remembered that fifteen pence were owing her from Stiena. She waited till Stiena came one day to drink a cup of coffee with her, and then said, "The fifteen pence, please."

Stiena swayed a little as if to some wonderful, festal music, and said, with an acid sweetness, "I told you such a lovely story while Lisa was dying. You don't get any money from me. Look, I've got a new fringe made, and I've bought new bonnet strings for myself."

From this time little Dusenschön was in Rieke's bad books,

although the cards had foretold him good — wealth and honour. She told all her visitors he would come to nothing.

So the two children, the little Dusenschön and the little Lau, grew up together and became friends. When they filled the street with their noise Rieke Thomson would rise in her big chair, and sometimes even get up heavily, open the window, and shout to the little Lau boy, "You weather-cock!" and to little Tjark Dusenschön, "You haven't even paid your midwife's fee!" What could two little boys do? What use was it for the harbourmaster to call to his boy with his big, comfortable laugh, "Don't let yourself be put upon, my boy!" or for Stiena to come to the door with flying bonnet strings and cry out in a sweet voice, "Tj-ark, Tj-a-rk, my sweet boy, come quickly to your granny."

Next door to the harbourmaster, and on the other side from the long house, lived a smith called John Frederick Buhmann. In Hilligenlei they called him Jeff for short. He was a very big man with wild, uncombed hair and a face black all over except for the yellow whites of his eyes and his yellow teeth. His great, tall frame looked as if it were falling to pieces, only held together by the big, stiff apron of blackish-brown leather. He looked all right from the front, but from behind quite dreadful, for the apron did not meet, and he was, so to speak, without sidepieces, nothing but a mass of loose, shabby trouser, and a thin strap of worn-out leather hanging down from the apron. Everyone knows what an elephant looks like from behind.

All the little street children were frightened of him, for as they passed he used to crawl out of the smithy half-doubled up, bellowing fearfully, and shake his great, black fist at them. Really, he was not a bad fellow, but a fool, and a childish fool at that, and lazy.

One day, when the two children were about six years old, he enticed them into the smithy and became their friend and protector against the fat woman. Many were the hours they spent with him — outside on the bench by the wall in summer, on the anvil by the hearth, often quite cold, in winter. One day Tjark brought the postcard which had come to his grandmother on the day of his birth. A long consultation ensued. For hours the big smith rumbled his wild hair with his big, sooty hands and pondered, holding the card up

against the sunlight, to discover hidden writing or secret signs. Then suddenly he would look up from the writing to fix his wild, soot-circled eyes on Tjark's face, searching for a likeness to any well-known man in Hilligenlei. Then, shaking his head, he would say, "You have no idea of it, no idea —"

Little Tjark sat opposite him, gazing at him with big, sparkling eyes till the profound brooding of the big, wild smith went so to his heart that he burst into tears, whereupon little Lau scolded and beat him, and thus Tjark grew good at crying and Lau good at his fists.

But Hule Beiderwand, the old orderly on the Kiel and Gottorp road, standing at the window of the long house, looking at the two boys, soon saw that Tjark was not the right one. He was indolent. So for a time he set his hopes on Pe Ontjes Lau. The lad was well built, and carried himself well. He was calm and self-reliant, and showed a gift for ruling. One day, however, Max Wieber, the school-master at the harbour school, told him that it was quite impossible to get twice two into Lau's head. So Hule gave up this hope too. The man who was to redeem the whole land from sloth and injustice and other imperfection must know his elements.

So the old man turned away from the window back to the bedside of his brother. He had taken over the task of looking after him from his parents when he was a young farmer fifty years ago. From his youth up he had been lame, and for the last thirty years confined to bed. Hule sat down by his side and read aloud to him from the Bible and the hymn book and Luther. He did not give up hope. He waited for a young couple to come and live in the long house, or perhaps for new life over there in the Friestadt school-house, where a lonely old pair now lived, to send the well-known light across the bay. For he thought to himself that up there on the open dyke, face to face with the wide sea, now as light as the sunshine, now as gloomy as fear itself, the child was to be born.

CHAPTER II.

WILLIAM BOJE, the new teacher, who came when the old man died over at Friestadt on the dyke, knew nothing of women. Once he had touched the hand of a friend's sister, as if by mistake, just to know what it would feel like. But then he was very young; he was twenty-four now. He had looked forward eagerly to his first post, picturing to himself with delight how, after school was over and he had taken a walk along the dyke, he should read the glorious books he had collected in his student days—the story of *Odysseus*, the soul-stirring dramas of *Macbeth* and *Faust*, and *Robinson Crusoe*. These and a few others seemed to picture forth the whole drama of life as in a mirror.

By March he had not been four months in the big, empty house when he fell in love. How it happened he did not know. It was a time of happy misery. He would stand in front of his bookcase and feel for a book, but though his eyes remained fixed upon the pages, his thoughts were soon far away. Suddenly a thrill of such intense rapture passed through him that he had to put the book down, and, plunging his hands in his fair hair, cry aloud for sheer happiness. So joyful did the thought of her make him; so deep was his love, though his eyes had never yet beheld her.

He would often go into the big front room and picture her to himself living with him. There, against the wall, would be the sofa; there they would sit in the evenings while he kissed her and held her in his arms. Out of the room he went into the passage, and felt in the cupboard. "There her Sunday dress will hang." Then into the kitchen, where he stood before the fire, to one side, so as not to be in her way, and heard her scolding, saying she could not have anyone watch her while she cooked. Then into the garden, where he called her, but she did not answer, looked for her, to find her at last hiding under the gooseberry bushes. When

he scolded her for eating the unripe fruit she said she had not eaten any, though the skins on the ground betrayed her. "Oh, what a child you are; what a funny, darling child!" In the evening, before going to bed, he went in to the empty middle room, and love's longing pictured her standing by his side. Her stately figure was full of youthful vigour; beneath the thick, hanging masses of her smooth, fair hair were proud, elusive eyes that looked at him neither sweetly nor kindly, but with a clear, intelligent gaze. Then, with a sudden movement, she lifted up her arms and put them round his neck, all sweetness, and God's most beautiful creation was revealed to his sight. So clear was her image in his soul, though he knew not who she was. It was a time of happy misery.

At last a day came when his restlessness seemed to reach its height. All day long he thought of her, and in the evening he seemed to be leaning over her bed and saying, in an affectionate tone he did not recognise as his own, "Darling, the girl shall be Heinke and the boy Pete."

He grew afraid of his thoughts. "Never mind. Thank Heaven I live in a world where girls are plentiful as blackberries. I will search for my dream-girl and marry her."

The very next day he heard that there was a dance in Hilligenlei, so when Harbourmaster Lau came over with his boat he went back with him.

Among the young girls sitting round the hall as he entered was one very like his dream-picture. Tall and stately, with fair hair, as she rose for the dance her fresh young beauty clad her like some royal garment. As she passed by him in its course he saw in her beautiful, deep eyes the mingled pride and shyness of an innocent soul, and he loved her more and more. His soul went out to her, full of joyful love, as he sat, lost in admiration of the beauty of her strong figure and her sweet, open face.

She happened to stop quite near him, and, turning her eyes shyly to where the men were as she passed on her partner's arm, met his, only to turn away with lowered head as a dove before the hawk, thinking, "What a fine, tall man; and how he stares at me. If he would only dance with me!"

The dance in the hall was an informal affair, for young Ringerang, the host, was nothing of a manager. There was

a perfect rush when the music began, for all the young men swarmed round the favourites. After two unsuccessful attempts to reach her William had to content himself with looking on.

She had watched him closely out of the corners of her eyes. Now that she was dancing again confused thoughts passed through her woman's mind. "I'll do it. No, I can't do it. To-day, now, he is here, and I may never see him again in my life. I am going to do it." Her shoe flew off at his feet. "Oh," she cried, with a faint scream, "my shoe is off." She turned to her partner. "There is no good thinking of dancing any more; the strap is broken." She made him a low curtsy and he, being young and foolish, went away.

"If you can't dance any more," said William, in a low, choked voice, "come with me."

She laid her hand on his arm and said, softly, "Let's go outside, not into the refreshment room."

"I will go on," he said, in a low tone, "come after me."

Delayed on the way by the crowd, when he came out of doors into the shadow of the lofty chestnut trees he did not immediately see her standing on the little bridge that led over the castle moat into the park. The castle itself is no longer there.

She laid her arm in his. "My father is here, in Hilligenlei. He will scold if he sees me!"

"Never mind that now," said he.

She laughed softly. "I'm not to talk about that?"

"No."

"What about, then?"

"Whether you like me a little."

She bent her head and said, hesitatingly, "Do you like me, then?"

"Dear, I have never kissed anyone, never held anyone in my arms. Love to me is serious."

Once more she bent her head and cast her eyes upon the ground, saying, shyly, "Yes, to me, too, it is the most serious thing in the world."

Then he stood still and took hold of her hand. "Only look up, only look at me," he begged.

But she still kept her head bent, shy of showing a face

which she knew confessed in its confusion love's sudden coming.

The light, penetrating through the moving branches, played upon her hair. He put his hand upon her forehead, bent back her head, imploring, "Come to me," kissed her timidly, kissed her again and again while she stood still with eyes cast down. She nestled to his side, both hands on his arm, as she walked on slowly by his side, her eyes once more upon the ground.

"Does your father dislike your going to dances?"

"Yes; he wants to keep us all at home, to save paying wages. Our farm is heavily mortgaged. My eldest sister has grown cold with age already."

He was furious. "That mustn't happen to you. You are not to be an old maid, darling."

"I don't want to, indeed; but who wants me?"

"It all depends on whom you want; that's what matters. Do turn your eyes to me for once. Look up; look at me. Ah, don't be afraid. There. Oh! what dear blue eyes they are. Only tell me what he must look like, the man you love?"

For a while she looked at him, without moving, with a kind of friendly curiosity. Then, in shy surrender, she raised her hands as if to put them on his shoulder. The action still incomplete, she murmured, with an exquisite embarrassment, "Something like you."

"Darling," he answered, stroking her hair.

As they stood thus, lost in gazing into each other's eyes, a step came under the chestnut trees. A heavy, broad-shouldered man, dressed like a workman, passed them, saying, in a raucous voice, "You come home with me."

Without a word she left Boje and followed her father till they disappeared down the avenue.

William walked back round the bay to Friestadt, home to his empty house. The next day he thought, "What a confiding darling she was with her dear little white face," and on the second pictured to himself her living in his house, her whom now he actually knew. He went through all the rooms seeing her there. On the third day came a letter from her, written in crooked letters—how could such a clever girl make such funny little letters,—and in such a queer style,

too! "I am to marry my cousin from Krautstiel. He has a little farm at the bottom of the dyke, and father says he does not want a dowry, and if they yoke together they could save two horses at ploughing times. My cousin is still quite young, but his skin is like horn, and does not feel human at all. I suppose I shall marry him though, for what am I to do? I shall get away from father, at any rate. My window is the last on the side facing the dyke, looking west, but what use is that? The whole night long I think of the schoolmaster from Friestadt, and I do so want to know if he still cares for me."

In the evening, when it was dark, putting on a thick, winter jacket, he went down to the beach, unfastened the crab-fisherman's boat, and rowed out into the bay. With the ebb tide flowing hard in that direction, he hoped to reach Krautstiel in an hour, returning in the morning with the incoming tide. Getting into the current, and keeping his course by the Hilligenlei lights, he gripped the oars. His youthful thoughts and the force of the stream impelled him on. When he looked up again after a time that seemed to him much shorter than it really was, instead of the herds of little white, lamb-like clouds, a few single dark cows pastured reflectively on the wide meadow of the sky. On his right the dyke, which had stood up in front of him a clear dark line, had disappeared. This troubled him, and he worked hard at his oars with the idea of getting back to it.

A bitter wind rose, the direction of which he could not discover. On every side nothing but the grey and black of the waves, growing bigger and bigger as they rolled more quietly past! Above, the sky was growing clearer. The cold was intense. "She shall pay for this, yes, she shall," he said to himself, as, angry and weary, he abandoned all hope of reaching his goal, and resolved to keep himself warm until the morning grey appeared, and avoid being driven too far out to sea by rowing against the stream. Hardly was the idea conceived when he became aware of a wonderfully clear light, or a tower, it seemed, in front of him. The tower, too, in the very heart of the raging sea, seemed to sway as its light, fiery red, swung on high as on a mast. Open-eyed and open-mouthed, he made straight for it—one, two—Good heavens! It was the lightship—the lightship that stood outside

the bay. Was he so far out of his way? He rowed right up to it, fastened his boat to a rope, and climbed on deck.

Two sailors were leaning over the taffrail.

"Hallo!" said one of them. "Where have you sprung from?"

"I am schoolmaster Boje from Friestadt. I lost my way trying to get to Hilligenlei."

"That's not true," said the sailor. "You were on your way to Krautstiel to see Hella Anderson!"

Boje stared with the deep-set, clever eyes sparkling in the sailor's weather-beaten face. "How on earth do you know that?"

"I am Thomas Jans. My wife wrote to me how Hella danced out of her slipper. She knows her quite well, for she has been in service up there at the farm."

"What was your wife doing at the dance with you on the lightship?"

"Well, you see, we've got three children, so she earns a bit. She's a chambermaid up at Ringerang's. Come, you're simply frozen."

On the companion were the captain and lieutenant. They shook their heads over Boje's story, and, after saying to Jans, "You can take him ashore," troubled no further about him.

He sat down in the cabin, on the extreme edge of a sea-chest, with the faint warmth of the little stove between his knees, his teeth chattering, and his whole body trembling with cold. "Have you been long on the lightship?"

"Three years now," said Thomas.

"How on earth can you endure it? Three years away from your wife! If it were a thousand miles away, perhaps; but only two — it must be the very devil."

"Yes, it is that; but what's to be done?" said the sailor.

"How do you mean?"

"Well, look here. To begin with, there's very little work going in Hilligenlei; nothing at all in winter for ten or twelve weeks; the whole place goes to sleep, as you know. Well — well, you see — in the first three years we had three girls right off, so I thought, is it to go on like that?"

"So that's why you went on the lightship?"

"Just so."

"And these three years you haven't been near your wife?"

"I've been over now and then — every six weeks or so; but I kept away from her, do you understand?"

"You're mad," said Boje, drawing the stove nearer, "quite mad. You're not living at all."

"Yes," said Thomas, looking at Boje from under his clever, deep-set eyes. "It's bad enough; my life isn't worth living. But look here. Suppose a boy came. The three girls are all right. They are sure to marry, somehow; but if it were a boy?"

"A boy? Be glad, man, be glad!"

"That's all very well, but what is to become of him? Look here. When I was a kid I always wanted to be learning. I never got enough of reading and learning. The school-master said to my father, 'It's a pity the boy must go to the fields,' but when I was ten I had to go. My learning then was over just when it should have begun — absolutely over. Well, seven years ago, just after I came back from the army, I was with Hargen Jansen, in Süderwisch, you know, and his brother, the parson, came to see him. I had to go about with him all over the place, down to the sea, up to the inland villages, while he tried to find out all his childish haunts; and in these three days, while I drove beside him in the cart, he talked about everything in heaven and earth and learned folks' ideas about it: about religion and the State, Parliament and self-government, trade and industry and agriculture. But he didn't give me any pleasure. When the three days came to an end and I went back to the stables, and was alone again in the evenings in the room beside the horses, I can tell you I have never been so unhappy in my life, for that's how it is and how it will always be. Do you understand? A big, empty house in one's head, no wall paper, no windows, no furniture, no one living in it at all — do you see what I mean? Well, girls can manage; they don't demand so much; but a boy — is he to go into that misery? is he to have that hideous, empty house in his head all his life? Do you see? Well, then, you know why I sit here on the lightship."

"Do you love your wife?" said Boje.

"I should think so, the dear little woman."

Resting his head on both hands, he fell into a brown study.

Three sailors came into the cabin and sat down. One of them cleaned his pipe while the other two looked on, saying

nothing. Thomas raised his head, and, as if speaking his thoughts aloud, said, "Carpenter, have you had a single happy hour in your whole life?"

"I don't know," said the carpenter. "Quite happy? no, I don't think so — perhaps when I was quite a boy."

"Think," said Thomas.

"Man, you're as curious as a child," said the carpenter, working at his pipe. "Quite happy? I don't know — yes — six or seven years ago, after the war, I went to London on a merchant steamer. On the way we had a strange experience. There was a passenger on board, a little man, whose face seemed to me a bit Jewish. One evening, when I was off duty, we had got into a regular nor'wester, and he came down to our quarters. Bob Stevens had just opened the Bible, so I suppose it was Sunday. Well, the fellow came, sat down, and, seeing the book, struck it with his hand — I can see him now — saying, 'That's the best book in the world, but it's to blame for most of the poverty and stupidity there is in it.' Yes, that's what he said, as near as possible."

Thomas Jans had lifted up his heavy head, and his eyes were fixed on the old carpenter's hairy face. "Go on."

"'The rich and the parsons,' said the Jew, 'throw sand in our eyes, and they get their sand from the Bible.' Yes, that's what he said, just that."

Thomas stared at Boje. "Well, schoolmaster?"

"A socialist," said Boje. "I've heard of them; a socialist. But that doesn't help me to get to Krautstiel."

"Go on."

"Well, what else did he say? Everything was to be changed, everything, and soon, too."

"I don't understand," began Thomas.

"Think, man; all equal — that's what he said — all equal. Now, because one rich man has a big field and a big wood the poor men have to shiver in the streets with their children, or live crowded together in a slum where the sun never shines. Because one rich man has magnificent clothes, travels all over the world, buys his children every book they want, ten poor men and their children are oppressed and ignorant all their lives. All that is to be changed, he said. The day is over when the nobleman's child rode in front and the workman's child crawled behind. Let both sit on the horse and see which can

ride, which falls off, do you see? so that the best men can help the people on. See? That's what he said."

Thomas Jans had got up on to his feet. "So that's what he said," he asked, slowly; "and there are people who believe it?"

"Yes," he said, "thousands in Hamburg and Berlin; members of the Reichstag, too."

"What was that about the children?" said Jans, staring at him. "Those who have something in their heads are to go up, that's it?"

"Yes, that's what he said."

"Then," said Thomas, "that's it all right. Yes, by Heaven, I will—I will leave the lightship and risk it. Come on, schoolmaster. I'll take you to Krautstiel and go to Hilligenlei from there."

The carpenter wiped his mouth and looked at the others. "Risk it, will he? Risk what?"

They shook their heads. The carpenter went on: "There was once a young fellow on the lightship just like that. He got quieter and quieter, and used to stare across at the Blue-sand buoy—stare for hours. Suddenly one evening he said to me, 'Carpenter, isn't that my wife?' He actually thought that the buoy, a great long thing at least fifteen yards high, was his wife! So I had to bring him on shore; a young man's no good on a lightship. Jans is gone quite silly. Going to risk it? What on earth's he going to risk?"

Meantime the other two had got over the side and were rowing hard, thoroughly soaked meantime by a cold rain that had come on hard and wet them through by the time they got into Krautstiel an hour later. Silent and frozen, they walked along the dyke against the biting wind until Jans said, "That's the farm. Do you see? There, under those dark poplars," shouting after him as he turned aside without a word.

"Hold hard, or the old fellow won't give up his girl."

To which Boje replied, without turning round, "Mind your own business, and I'll look after mine."

Coming down to the thatched roof, before he had had time to distinguish the separate windows, he saw Hella Anderson sitting in the window-ledge. She put her arm round him, then shrank back. "Oh, how wet you are, and frozen with cold. Come quickly inside, you dear, dear thing. You must get into my warm bed; you're simply perishing with cold."

He got in at the window. "My darling," he said, holding her fast in his arms. "Tell me, must you marry your cousin, with his horny skin, to save your father two horses?"

Clinging fast to him, she nodded. "Darling, don't desert me."

"Desert you? I desert *you*? Oh, how beautiful you are!"

So he came to her for six weeks, and then she had to tell her father.

When the time came a little boy was born in the long house at Hilligenlei. When Rieke Thomson took him up to wash him she turned to his mother and said, in a frightened voice, "Look in the middle of his breast; he's got a flaming red mark, as big and round as a four-shilling piece. What on earth is it?"

Thomas Jans bent over his weary little wife. "Didst hear, Mala?"

She felt for his hand and said: "All the three years that you were away, especially at night, when I lay in bed and couldn't go to sleep, I used to see the lightship in my mind's eye, and the light was always as big and round as a four-shilling piece."

About midnight, when Rieke had looked after the infant and put it in its mother's arms, old Hule Beiderwand, who had been watching by his brother's dying bed, knocked at the window to say that the light was shining opposite. So off went Rieke, just as she was, to help Hella with her first child — a plump girl with yellow hair like her own that lay all over the pillow. Her husband pressed her hand so hard that she had to beg him to take care, so deeply did he rejoice in the child that his dear, lovely, passionate wife had given him.

And so the two children grew up. The little Jans boy grew up, in the long house at Hilligenlei, a delicate boy, but not really weak, seldom seeing his parents. His mother worked at Ringerangs', and his father stood by the edge of the sea, digging. When they went away he was still asleep; when they came back he was in bed. Only on Sundays he sat on her lap, or stood between her knees; and soon a time came when he caught hold of his mother's dress and followed her all over the big house to the last door.

There sat a huge, round woman. Everything about her

seemed round, especially her eyes. She drank coffee with brown sugar, and gave him a lump, saying to his mother, "Extraordinary eyes that boy has; always wondering. I like the boy, all but those eyes of his. What in the world is there to wonder at? I'll see if the cards have anything to say."

All that the cards said was that there was not much money, and, as little Mala Jans said proudly, "Happiness did not depend on that."

Sometimes he would put his little hand inside his father's big, hard one and go next door into Hule Beiderwand's room. He gave him a bit of bread and butter and an old Bible story-book with astonishing pictures, and while he sat kneeling on a chair at the window with the book on the ledge talking to the pictures Thomas Jans spoke of his hopes that the new Labour party would make the world holy, and so realize their old faith.

But the old man had become reserved, and said, obstinately, "No; a man must live *here* in the bay, *here* on the dyke, and make a Hilligenlei, a Holyland, out of *this* place with the power of his might: that is our faith."

He called the child in his high, hollow voice and looked at him with his darkened eyes, saying, "No; this is not the one; his eyes are timid; he is afraid," and he almost pushed the boy away.

CHAPTER III.

ONE day, when he was seven years old, his mother said she wanted to take him across the bay. In the house he could just see in the distance, on the dyke, there lived a little girl who was just his age. With observant eyes full of a somewhat uneasy wonder he followed his mother down to the pier, clutching, as usual, tightly hold of her skirt.

A fresh breeze came to meet them. On the pier was Pe Ontjes Lau, and he had on a woollen cap and wooden shoes, such as no one else wore in the whole bay.

One day a smack from Jutland had been driven into Hilligenlei by a westerly gale, and for three days it lay off the pier. For a whole day Pe Ontjes and the Jutlander had sat opposite to one another without speaking or moving, the Jutlander in his woollen cap and wooden shoes on the hatchway, Pe Ontjes on land, on top of a post, both with their hands up to the elbows in their trousers pockets. The next day Pe Ontjes began to bargain. They got on quite well with low German and low Danish and their fingers to help them out. With his teeth set hard, Pe Ontjes paid sixteen good pence into the Jutlander's horny yellow hand. Half a year later the woollen cap and the wooden shoes came safely to hand, not nicely wrapped up, by post, but handed from smack to smack from Jutland right across to Hamburg, and so over to Hilligenlei, with this address, no more, "On the pier at Hilligenlei is a twelve-year-old boy; these are his."

From that hour he had worn the costume whenever there was a cold wind, putting it on as soon as he came out of school, and on the understanding that there were to be no jeers.

He was standing now on the bridge, his legs wide apart, munching a big piece of black bread, spread with roast potato. To keep the potato from blowing away he had stuck it to the bread with black syrup. He looked at his shy little neighbour, clinging fast to his mother, up and down with a calm and fatherly air, and asked, "What are you going to be?"

The little fellow looked at him sharply out of his deep blue eyes. "What are *you* going to be?"

Pe Ontjes was astonished, and began to feel a certain respect for Kai. "I am going to sea, of course. In four years I shall be done with school, and then I am going to South America."

"You haven't chosen a very fine day," said the harbour-master to Mala Jans. "The wind is getting round to the north."

"You must stick close to the Danish coast, father," said he of the woollen cap. "Then you can get back easily."

"Yes," said Lau, reflectively, "but then it will be late and cold and dark, not for little boys."

They embarked and made a good start. Pe Ontjes stood on the bank, looking after them.

"You treat your boy as if he were thirty," said little Mala, in a captious tone.

"Yes," said Lau, "as usual, you are right. My father was a day labourer in Eierstadt. In my youth I didn't learn reading or writing. Then I went to sea and went all over the world, but all the time I cared for nothing but eating and drinking. I often seemed to hear a smothered voice within me saying, 'Bestir yourself, man; rise a little in the world.' But I only began to wake up when I was about forty. Then I looked about me and learnt a few things, passed the short-distance certificate, and so got the post of harbourmaster here. And I can't get any further. That's why, you see, I'm glad of every question that Pe Ontjes asks, and why I talk as seriously to him as to someone of my own age. He's naturally rather a sluggard and no hero at his books, just like I used to be, but you'll see that having a really sensible friend will make things easier for him, and he'll get on better than I have."

When Mala Jans, holding her little boy by the hand, came into the clean hall of the schoolhouse and found no one there she blushed shamefacedly, and was going to slip quietly out of the door when she heard a voice from the inner room, "Is that Mala? Come in here, I can't get up."

So the two went on tiptoe through the hall and the kitchen, and found Hella Boje on a chair by the window in a loose, open garment with a new-born babe at her breast, the clear sunshine falling on the charming picture.

Mala clasped her hands. "Oh! I had no idea!"

Hella laughed. "I thought you did not know, and I was looking forward to your astonishment. A big girl, isn't she? Number three already!"

It was Wednesday afternoon, and in came the teacher fresh from his books. In his beautiful, steel-grey eyes and in his joyful bearing was something of the reflected glory of great and strange times and extraordinary events. He called the little boy to him, and, holding back his head, said to his wife, "What a real old German he looks. Like one of Siegfried's men, one of the peasants, not the noblemen. I wager he will be a dreamer, like his father." As he said this the night on the fireship came into his mind. "Yes, I will risk it," and he laughed.

"But where are your two eldest?" said Mala. "Not ill, I hope?"

"They — ill!" said Boje, and, getting up, he led the little boy through the kitchen, and, opening the outer door, pointed out two children, a boy and girl, lying in the long grass at the edge of the pond, so that only their fair heads were visible above it. They looked sharply at the newcomer out of their grey eyes.

"This is little Kai Jans. Make friends, or you shall be smacked." And with this Boje returned to his books. Kai remained standing at the kitchen door; the other two lay face downwards on the grass, with outstretched necks.

"There's a scarecrow," said Anna to Pete.

"Yes, isn't he? that's a real workman's boy. Look at his boots; not made for him. Mother might have told us."

"We have no use for you just now," said Anna, "but I shall soon quarrel with Pete, and then I'll play with you; until then you can stay there and look on."

Kai was not surprised by this treatment. They seemed so grand, and all their surroundings too. They were engaged in weaving a peaked cap by plaiting rushes. As both were working at the same piece a quarrel soon arose. "You're no good," said Pete; "leave it to me."

"The cap isn't only for you," said Anna, getting annoyed.

"It's all one to me," said Pete. "Leave off, or I'll smack you," suiting the action to the word.

Anna retreated, her eyes on the cap. Anger visibly rose and then died down in the determined little face. As she

looked up her eyes fell on Kai, and she said to her brother, "Let's beat him to bits! What else is he good for?"

But Pete, remembering his father's warning, said, "No, we won't beat him; we'll frighten him."

Suddenly jumping up they made a dash upon him like practised highwaymen, and dragged him to the pond. "We're going to duck you in the pond," said Pete; "that's what we do with Hilligenlei boys."

"Hundreds are there already," said Anna.

He did not scream, only looked at them curiously. Pete held on to his jacket; Anna, lying full length on the grass, had his ankles fast.

"Tell us a story, or into the pond you go."

"About Pe Ontjes Lau?" he said, quickly.

"We know him, a hateful boy."

"He's as big again as I am," Kai went on, "and stands on the pier, looking over the water, with a woollen cap on, and he's going to be a captain. Then he'll go far, far away, and ——"

"He doesn't know any more," said Pete.

"And I shall go with him far away. There are lions and elephants, and I shall be a king there. Yes."

Anna brushed her fair hair back from her forehead and looked at him with more interest.

The boy got hot and excited, twittering with big, wondering eyes like a young lark who uses its wings for the first time when it has been frightened out of its nest in the furrow by a weasel, and as soon as it sees that it can fly forgets all its fear in the joy of this wonderful new power.

"There I build a house for myself that reaches up to the sky, all made of gold, and in it there live my father and mother, and Pe Ontjes Lau, and all the other people in the world, and do nothing but laugh and sing and enjoy themselves. Nobody has a cough there. Nobody dies. Will you come too?"

His clever east-country face was irradiated with kindness.

The girl pulled his foot so that he fell down, and, picking up the badly plaited rush hat, crammed it on his head. "There's a crown for you," she said.

He did not mind. "If you like you may come too," he said, his eyes sparkling with kindness. "Would you like it?"

"Me, too," said Pete, standing up. He saw that more tre-

mendous thoughts were coming to the fair-headed boy with the quick eyes. Looking wildly round like someone suddenly awakened, he jumped up and ran through the kitchen into the sitting-room, the other two after him.

"We have been quite good," he said at once in a loud voice.

"He wants to be a king," said Anna. "That's his crown."

The teacher took his children by the fair hair and said, "And what do you want to be?"

"Oh, you know," said she, "we want to be neighbour Martin; have as many horses and cows as he has."

"Suppose I haven't any money?"

"That doesn't matter," said Anna, "if we *must* be neighbour Martin!"

"Who says that you must?" said Boje, in an almost irritated voice.

"God says so," they both replied.

"Get away," he said, angrily. "You always end up with that. You make God the servant of your own wills."

He turned them both out. As they stood in the doorway the sun fell on the fair, defiant heads, and their hair shone like the wood of a new-cut ash-tree.

"The children are a great trouble to us, Mala," said Hella. "They are dear, good children, but so impetuous, so quick to anger, full of such ideas! If we were people of consequence and well off they might do great things, but we are poor, even in debt. If they rush out into life, out of such narrow surroundings, full of this wild eagerness, they will dash themselves against fearful obstacles; they will find the way hard and a cold wind blowing against them; they will make themselves hot with running, and then they will fall. Boje and I were just the same, with our heads full of lofty ideas. What wonderful things I used to see in my little room on the dyke! Well, the greatest wonder of all came true for us; we saw and belonged to one another, and so we are quiet and contented. But can such good fortune fall to our children?"

Little Mala Jans looked shyly from one to the other and thought, "What have six short years made of the two young things who pressed each other's hands secretly at Ringerang's party, thinking of nothing but possessing one another!"

She got up and said she must go, or Harbourmaster Lau

would be waiting for her, and there was supper to be got ready. She said goodbye, and left the house with her boy.

When Thomas Jans came home at night with his spade and heard of the trouble they had at the schoolhouse from the masterfulness of the children, his deep-set eyes sparkled as he sat looking thoughtfully at the table, and he said, in joke, "Then we need have no trouble; our boy is as meek as a whipped cur!"

Mala Jans flew out at that. "You have no eyes and ears then," said she, and went on to tell him, in a shy, trembling voice, of her boy's inner life, and how he had said he wanted to be a king. "He is every bit as proud, only in a different way, as the Boje children. His pride is deep, deep down. His is a different sort of kingdom."

"What sort?" said Thomas, astonished. "What sort of one? One in the moon, perhaps."

The next day he picked up courage for the first time to go into the middle of the street and peer into the dark smithy, where conversation reigned for once instead of the clang of the hammer and the roar of the furnace. Pe Ontjes Lau saw him come out, and said, "Come inside." So he went in and looked about him. On the anvil sat Jeff, huge and black in his messy leather apron, with his hammer tucked away comfortably under his arm. Scheinhold, the journeyman, stood at the bellows. All three were looking at Tjark Dusenschön, who sat on the lathe dangling his legs and moving his bare feet up and down.

"Why shouldn't I wear the green handkerchief if the mayor gave it to me?" said Tjark.

"It's not true," said Pe Ontjes. "The money came from his grandmother. Listen to his 'mayor'; how he says it! Call him Daniel Peters; all Hilligenlei calls him so, silly."

"The mayor gave it you, did he?" said Jeff, raising his eyebrows. "So, so" — his stiff apron made a noise like the falling-in of a mine when he moved — "so; then I must return to my old opinion, anyhow."

"What opinion, sir?" asked Scheinhold, blinking as if some buzzing insect had got inside his eyes.

"Shut up," said Jeff. "I'm not talking to you. My old opinion is that Tjark Dusenschön is the mayor's natural son,

so now you know. If we only had the postcard. It was wrong of you, Pe Ontjes, to throw it into the harbour."

Pe Ontjes nodded slowly. "Go on, go on. He is half-cracked already. You'll drive him stark mad."

Tjark was happy at being once more the subject of conversation, and he turned about, dangling his wide trousers and turning back his big toes in a way that terrified little Kai Jans.

"Look at his legs," said Jeff. "Whose legs are like that, as straight as a lance? The mayor's, of course; and who else is so arrogant?"

The journeyman, Scheinhold, rubbed his eyes and said, "It may be because of his royal blood."

Pe Ontjes got up to go. "This drivell is too much for me. What is he? A child born out of wedlock, whose grandmother is an old idiot, and whom Rieke Thomson scolds daily for never having paid her fifteen pence, that's what he is."

"Yes," said Jeff, creaking his leather apron. "I grant you the present is dark, but a star of hope is shining."

"Well," said Pe Ontjes, "are you thinking of paying the fifteen pence for him?"

The master sadly shook his head. "I can't. You know that. I have a wife and children, and debts to pay. But you're right. As long as the midwife's fee isn't paid he cuts a sorry figure. To put it properly, he isn't a citizen."

"Every day the fat old witch scolds me," said Tjark, looking about with his shining brown eyes. "I'm no good while that goes on."

"You could have paid the fifteen pence yourself long ago if you had wanted to," said Pe Ontjes. "A boy of fifteen can earn fifteen pence, but you must go and buy a green handkerchief, or else a striped blue or red cap off a boy at the grammar school, or something stupid of that sort."

"Suppose I am the mayor's son," said Tjark, his eyes sparkling. "I can't go about the town like every Tom, Dick, and Harry."

"Right again," said Jeff.

Pe Ontjes got up and made for the door once more. "I won't have anything more to do with you," he said; "you are cracked, all three of you. Come away, Kai," and he went towards his home. After a few steps, however, he came to a

standstill, stood for a moment lost in thought, and then, in a decided voice, "Yes, that is the best way. I will clear the business right out, Tjark."

Tjark leapt out of the smithy, barelegged and speechless. "I cannot go on any longer hearing the endless cursing and complaining about your old fee. It's gone on for years. I mean to make an end of it."

"I shall be grateful to you for ever," said Tjark.

"Don't be anything of the sort, silly. Grateful? Is a man grateful? Grateful is the word you hear in school, but a healthy man isn't grateful."

He felt in his purse, and then struck across the dyke with the two others to the long house. Then he said to Kai Jans, "Just run in and see if she is in her big chair and if she's got her foot-warmer, and if she's thinking, and if she's got her slippers handy for throwing. Say something and just shove the slippers a bit out of the way, then come back and leave the door open."

The little fellow went in, came out again, and said, in a low voice, "It's all right."

Then Pe Ontjes drew a deep breath, rushed into the room, and, raising his clenched fist, almost drove the fifteen pence into the board. "There are the fifteen pence that Tjark Dusenschön owes you, and now let your confounded cursing be at an end."

The old woman had leant back in horror. Then, appearing on the threshold, "You weathercock," from the distance Tjark cried out in an injured tone, "you are to say no more of that now!"

"What?" cried the old woman. "Say no more about it? For a vagabond like you — other people have to pay your fee for you. Is that Kai Jans with you? H'm, he's beginning early. He'll come to no good. Just come in here, you vagabond."

Pe Ontjes shook his head, and said, dejectedly, "The fifteen pence are thrown away." Then suddenly his anger rose. Drumming on his legs with both fists, he shouted, "Never again will I bother about that wretched Tjark Dusenschön. Where is he gone?"

Sniffing danger, he had fled to his grandmother's door.

Stiena Dusenschön stood there with waving bonnet strings. "Tj-a-ark, Tjark, come to your granny."

"I will tell you something," said Pe Ontjes to Kai. "In the future I shall only have to do with you."

The little fellow looked happily up at him. "Yes; then you must promise to take me with you when you are a captain."

"You are a funny one," said Pe Ontjes. "And where do you want to go to?"

"Ah! that you shall see," he said, earnestly. "Do you know, we shall go to — oh! to a glorious country," and in his eagerness he stamped on the ground.

"Done, then," said Pe Ontjes, clapping him on the shoulder. He began to be fond of the little fellow, and took him about with him everywhere. And the little fellow grew strong in his company.

CHAPTER IV.

THE teacher at the harbour school had to be a very conscientious man, for the school hours were arranged to fit the tides so that the children of the sailors and fishermen could help their parents; strong, too, for the boys used to come, some barefooted, some in clattering slippers, some in heavy boots; they came in leather breeches and shirt-sleeves; their voices were loud and unmodulated; their skulls were somewhat thick.

It was a hot summer afternoon. The boys lay, in their shirt-sleeves, lazily spread-eagled on the desks, pretending to be entirely absorbed in the writing-lesson; the girls lifted their books from time to time and fanned themselves. Max Wieber, likewise in his shirt-sleeves, sat stolidly behind his desk, leaning his bullet head, surrounded by fiery-red hair, against the blackboard on the wall behind him. It was a constant temptation to think of tea to be enjoyed with his wife when school was over, under the lime tree, but he wrestled with the temptation, conquering it each time with a new text. "Work while it is yet day," he murmured, slightly bending his big head and taking up the red pencil and a new exercise book.

After a while his wife's face appeared on the green at the end of the passage. "It's so hot," she said.

"Let not a woman speak in the assembly," he whispered quickly, shaking his mane, and this temptation was over in its turn.

Then up got Pe Ontjes, first on the boys' side, and said, in his hoarse, manly voice, "We were to get back our exercises to-day." Not that Pe Ontjes was in the least curious to see his own exercise; he merely wanted to put some life into the proceedings.

Max Wieber had an unconscious inclination to do whatever Pe Ontjes proposed with his calm, self-confident air. He took the great pile of blue exercise books and said, in his droning voice, "The subject was 'The Story of a Drop of Water.' I

said that the drop of water was to come in with the tide, and then relate all that it saw in the bay of Helligenlei; then, evaporating in the harbour, it was to rise up in mist, to fall down again as a drop of rain, and flow down the street into the sea once more. In your work you were to show, you vagabonds, your understanding of how clouds and rain come to be. Well, here is Kai Jans' exercise — Kai Jans — there is something very peculiar in that boy. Sometimes he is the cleverest in the school, and sometimes far the stupidest. If you ask him about the moon he knows what sort of men live there and how they get their boots soled; but stick his nose into a thorn-bush, and he doesn't know what it is. Pe Ontjes, stop laughing in that stupid way."

Max Wieber picked up his eyeglasses from the desk with two sharp fingers, put them on his nose, and picked up the exercise to read it out. Then Kai Jans got up, in the third row, anxious entreaty in his eyes.

"What do you want?"

He opened his mouth, but sat down without saying anything.

"Well, the raindrop rises from the harbour in mist. 'But now a tremendous west wind rose. It drove the cloud, where the drop was, thousands of miles eastward, and when it was over St. Petersburg it saw the Emperor of Russia driving with his wife in a coach of gold, driving as fast as the cloud, ever eastwards. So they came to Siberia. And there the raindrop saw the Emperor set all the prisoners free. And it fell straight into the well from which the Chinese Emperor has his water drawn. Then his servant-maid came and took the drop out of the well in her pail, and dipped a cup into the pail, and gave it to the Emperor to drink. And so he drank up the drop. He had been a wicked man, but now he became good, for the drop, which came from the holy bay, was holy.'"

Most of them sniggered. A few of the girls looked with wondering eyes across to Kai, whose brown hair covered such marvellous things.

"Stop laughing in that stupid way. Kai Jans is a wonderful boy — yes. Generally, he's as shy as a little hare; then, hey, presto! he's a great, wild thing, strikes behind him and in front of him, and has all Paradise at his disposal — all Para-

dise, indeed! Next time you'll confine your thoughts to Hilligenlei, do you hear?"

He laid the exercise down and took up another.

"Well, Kai Jans at least stuck to the drop of water. But Pe Ontjes Lau—Pe Ontjes Lau! You imagine Pe Ontjes Lau is head boy in the Hilligenlei harbour school? He's far more than that; he's harbourmaster of Hilligenlei, and, more than that, he's mayor of Hilligenlei. Well, his drop of water comes swimming into the bay with the tide all right. Then he becomes too preposterous. He uses words that I know well enough. You and your father, you vagabond, have done the exercise together. 'Then the drop of water saw that the harbour stream got narrower and narrower, so that a decent-sized cutter could not possibly come though. Klaus Voss' *Joanna* was stuck for two tides off the Danish sandbank, and could not stir. It is a fearful piece of stupidity for a town to allow its harbour to be choked; it's like tying a string round a pig's nose when you want to fatten it; it gets thinner and thinner, till it is like two boards fastened together, and finally dies. Thus you see Hilligenlei getting poorer and stupider every day.' I haven't the least objection to Pe Ontjes Lau having the harbour stream cut out when he is once mayor, but I shall give him a good spanking for talking as big as if he were mayor when he isn't anything of the sort, yet. Now we will have a short interval."

With these words Max walked serenely down the middle passage out of the schoolroom, to have a chat with his wife.

Turning round on his form, Pe Ontjes found the eyes of all the bigger boys upon him. "Children," said he, "let come what may, I am not going to give the old fellow the pleasure of walloping me to-day; I'm off. Tide's low at four. Who's coming?"

"That means an awful thrashing," they said.

"Who's coming?" said Pe Ontjes.

"Me," said Kai Jans.

"You?"

"He read out my exercise; that's why I'm coming."

Five went with him. There were the Tams, the fisherman's two boys (one of them died young, as a sailor, in a fearful wreck; the other is now a fisherman on Lake Ontario); the shepherd's two boys (both of whom afterwards served on the

Russian frontier, and are now dock labourers, as strong as ever, and as ready for any sort of spree), and Kai Jans. Tjark Dusenschön had slunk out, and watched them disappear from behind the shed.

They made their way through the garden into the street, crossed the dyke, and so ran over the green plain — a wide, absolutely level plain covered with beautiful short grass. Not a house or a tree anywhere, only here and there a herd of heavy cattle or a group of splendid colts. Across it the little band of children trotted. In the distance, at the edge, from time to time a solitary flash from a workman's spade. Overhead the sky, endlessly high, endlessly broad.

They soon got to the edge of the green plain, and then in they went, over their ankles, up to their knees, in the grey mud. There was a great deal of groaning, complaining, and bragging, and then out they came on to firm ground once more that seemed to extend right to the far, far distant horizon, where a narrow strip of silver lay.

They talked about everything they saw — the bird that flew past, the sail on the horizon, the Danish sandbank, where the treasure ship lay buried that would some day be discovered, for the sand was breaking away. "And then Hilligenlei will be ever so rich."

"Nonsense," said Pe Ontjes. "It's true there is a Danish ship, but there's no gold in it; nothing but wood."

When they saw anything in the distance each of them said what he thought it was. They examined everything they found — a plank end, a broken chest, a basket that the steward of the liner had cast overboard — and there was eager conversation about it all. It seemed endless, the way, but at last they got to the harbour stream. The tide was out, but it was still sixty yards wide, flowing slowly down to the sea in its bed of grey mud.

The others began to search in the shelving edge of the sand on the chance that the prow of the treasure ship or its taffrail might be sticking out. Pe Ontjes and Kai were gazing at a short, green strip on the water to the far side of the stream, and the others soon looked over too.

"Look!" they said; "a little island."

"Kai Jans discovered it last Sunday," said Pe Ontjes. "He stuck up a stake and wrote on it, 'This land was discovered by

me,' and then his name. The stake is still there, but the bit of wood you wrote on is gone, Kai!"

At that moment a shout of childish joy came clearly across. All gazed in astonishment. Pe Ontjes began to yell, "Coo-ee, coo-ee."

Up rose two fair-haired children, about ten years old, both bare-footed, the girl in a sleeveless dress that fluttered in the wind, the boy in his shirt and knickers.

"There are Anna and Pete Boje," said Kai.

"Ha!" cried Pe Ontjes, "what are you doing there? Will you get out of there? Kai Jans has discovered the island!"

Then Pete cried across in his high, clear voice, "I have taken possession!"

"Golly!" cried Pe Ontjes, stripping off shirt and trousers, and getting into the water.

The big Tams boy stood in his shirt too. "Oh! Pe Ontjes," cried Kai, "don't; that's the Friestadt side."

"Come on," cried Pe Ontjes.

"I can't; the current is too strong."

Pete Boje stood on the stake, his legs wide apart, trying to persuade his sister to run away; but she stayed beside him. The two big boys swam across, got on land, and rushed upon them. Kai saw Pete picking up mud to throw at the naked assailants, and Tams, too, picked some up and threw it so as to hit the girl on the ear and hair. The force with which it was thrown made her bend her head.

Then he shouted across the stream, "Dear Pe Ontjes, come to meet me," and running into the water just as he was, he began to swim.

Pe Ontjes had turned round as if seized by a heavy hand. It seemed to go right through him, this "dear, wonderful boy." He ran to the water to meet him swimming, as he always did, with eyes wide open, spitting out the salt. In the middle of the stream he turned round and swam across Kai's way to keep off the force of the current. Kai swam on bravely, breathing hard, his eyebrows drawn down and his mouth shut tight, and got safely to land. The big Tams boy had picked up little Pete, and was shaking him grievously.

The little fellow looked at him in determined silence as if to say, "I can't defend myself, but I can show you I'm not afraid."

"Hold him tight," said Pe Ontjes.

"How could you hit a little girl?" said Kai, standing in front of the tall Tams boy with clenched fists and sparkling eyes. "Come, and I'll wash you," he said to her.

She was as defiant as her brother, though — pushed his hand away with angry looks. In spite of her fair hair and her light-gray eyes, she looked scowling enough.

"I only swam across to help you, and I was nearly drowned."

"Are you the boy who came the day Heinke was born?"

"Yes," said he; "do you recognize me?" Dipping his hand in the water, he shyly brushed the mud off her hair and ear. "It's just as well I did come."

She looked round at her brother. "Tell the big Lau boy not to hurt my brother."

"I say," cried Pe Ontjes, "come here a minute; they have found a big eel; it must weigh at least a pound."

Pete Boje looked with disgust at the eel playing awkwardly in the wet sand. "You can't hold him; he's so slippery."

"What?" said Pe Ontjes. He made his fingers into a hook, picked the eel up by the neck, and, looking wildly about him for a moment, bit the eel's head off and spat it out.

Anna Boje gave a loud, shrill scream, shaking herself so that her short, loose dress blew hither and thither. "Little pig," she cried, standing stiff with horror. "Get away, you pig! What a disgusting thing you are."

He pretended he wanted to eat her next, jumping round her, gnashing his teeth.

She shrank back, holding her arm before her face, abusing him all the time. "You're the most horrible person in the world, you — you eel-eater!"

"If you touch her," said Pete, "I'll hit you. I'm littler than you, but you won't find me so easy to deal with, for all that."

"Come, Pe Ontjes," said Kai, "take your eel, and let's go back again."

"They're a couple of boobies," said Pe Ontjes, looking at them well-pleased, and turning away.

So they threw themselves into the water again, Tams on the left, Kai in the middle, Pe Ontjes to the right, keeping off the current, with the eel stuck in his mouth, shaking his head

vigorously, and puffing and blowing with tremendous energy. When they got up on to the bank beside the others and looked about them they saw the two children standing side by side, all alone in the vast empty greyness lit here and there by dazzling rays of sunshine that fell upon their hair.

The girl raised her hand threateningly, and her brave little voice rang across in clear defiance, "Eel-eater, eel-eater!"

"The girl is as wild as the boy," said Pe Ontjes, hollowing his hand to shout back, "You shall be my wife! Do you like the prospect?"

But back came the same scornful word, clear and sharp as the flight of an angry bird.

Next morning, when Pe Ontjes went down the street to school, his fellow culprits came out from the doorways, or from within the houses, and joined him. All were quiet, and avoided looking at one another. Pe Ontjes himself did not seem in a very elated mood. When they came into the schoolyard he turned round and said, gravely, "Boys, this is our death-ride!" In school they had read of the ride of Mars la Tour.

He burst the door open and walked in.

Max Wieber held fast to the desk, crossed his cane in front of him, and said an inward prayer, as he always did before striking. As a boy he had broken a comrade's arm in his rage. In turn they got a good thrashing. When he came, last of all, to Kai Jans he asked him, "What did you stand up for yesterday? What did you want?"

Kai said in a low voice, entreaty in his eyes, "I wanted to ask you not to read mine out. I can't bear their laughing at me, and they do it so often."

He hesitated a moment, then thrashed him too.

When it was over he lifted up his cane to threaten the whole street, saying, sternly, "Woe to you if you laugh at Kai Jans. What is it to you if he has all Paradise in himself and the angel Gabriel to boot? Are you going to drive him out of Paradise, you vagabonds? Leave that to God."

CHAPTER V.

By the first of March Pe Ontjes had his whole outfit ready. He did not need a new chest, but took his father's, which had been used as a wood-box for the last sixteen years in that slovenly household. He painted it brown with his own hands, bought a new lock, and packed it as neatly as possible. Keys in pocket, he sat on his form with an expression of great boredom. The day after Palm Sunday he was to go on board the ship *Gude Wife* at Hamburg.

One might have thought he would start without a single regret, but no! When he looked to one side there sat Tjark Dusenschön, tall and thin, with restless shoulders and eyes twinkling with friendliness. He was to be confirmed, too, on Palm Sunday, but his things were very far from being ready. He did not even know what he wanted to be.

True, Pe Ontjes Lau had once said, "I will trouble my head no more about Tjark." But is it ever possible to do that? Hasn't one got to trouble about him? One has to say to him, sooner or later, "Don't laugh in that sugary way, fellow," and "Don't tell lies, anyhow," or another day, "Where did you get that cap and that scarf, pray?" The only alternative to troubling oneself about Tjark was killing him outright.

There was deep consultation in the smithy. Jeff Buhmann did not know what to say; he was greatly puzzled. "He's no good — too lazy," he said.

Pe Ontjes did not know what to say; he was greatly annoyed. "He's as lazy as you, and he has another fault besides — he's magnificent. He has an absurd idea of himself."

Scheinhold, the apprentice, did not know what to say, he was vague, and looked about him suspiciously. "We must send him out into the world, just as he is. I expect he'll discover some new trade — something between a tight-rope dancer and a blacksmith. If so, lots of people will find work."

Tjark sat in the midst of them, on the anvil, in a costume

that came from various sources, and grey stockings. Round his long neck was a red scarf with long, dangling ends; on his head a battered old first-form cap; his slippers had fallen off. Dangling his feet and twisting his toes, he regarded them all with eyes twinkling with friendliness.

Kai Jans, feeling rather young and inexperienced to take part in an affair of such importance, sat sideways on the vice on top of the nailbox, silently attentive to whoever was speaking.

"At any rate, his grandmother has been to the vicar," said Jeff.

"Grandmother!" said Pe Ontjes. "Good Lord! Stiena Dusenschön! Of course, I might have known it." He swayed his shoulders and arms solemnly, smiling. "He was to tell her, then, what you were to be?"

Tjark was not in the least hurt. He looked at his feet, playing hide and seek with his toes.

"She asked the vicar whether I could not possibly find employment with some nobleman, as an equerry or chamberlain, or something of that sort."

"Well," said Pe Ontjes, a mixture of scorn, contempt, and uncertainty in his voice, "and what did the vicar say?"

Tjark lifted up his eyebrows. "He said there was a great deal of competition!"

"Madness!" said Pe Ontjes, much relieved.

"It must be something," said Jeff, "where he can wear grand clothes and have to do with grand people."

"There mustn't be any dirty work," said Pe Ontjes, with profound scorn. "Oh! he will be a great success."

The journeyman, Scheinhold, rubbed his eyes like the skipper of a sailing vessel which has been becalmed for three days. "If I may be allowed to speak, he ought to be clerk to the mayor."

Then, indeed, Jeff shouted aloud, "To Daniel Peters, his natural father! Truly, the child belongs to his father! Yes, indeed, boys, that's it—he is to be clerk to Daniel Peters!" He put his great, sooty hand up to his eyes as if he were looking at a landscape bathed in sunshine. "Yes, I can see his life's path stretching out clear before my eyes."

Pe Ontjes looked at the excited smith with displeasure. "It would be better if you would think of what is to be done now," he said.

"He must go and present himself," said Scheinhold.

"Yes, it's called 'presenting,' but we don't know yet whether he will."

"Who?" said Pe Ontjes.

"Tjark? whether he will? As if we should ask him. He will be whatever we decide."

"But I can't present myself in these clothes," said Tjark, in a complaining voice. "And I have no boots at all. The mayor is a grand person, too!"

They looked sadly down. Then at last Scheinhold lifted up his grey head. "If I may be allowed to speak, Nissen's old coach is in our shed. Suppose we were to sell some forty lottery tickets, at a shilling each, and raffle it—that would give us money for a suit of clothes and boots."

"Very good," said Jeff, "very good," and he kept on nodding his head without looking up.

Pe Ontjes was not satisfied. "It's too old," he said. "As long as I can remember, it has stood there in that dark shed. We might go and see, however."

Jeff and his journeyman exchanged a long look. "What for? The coach is there, and that is all that matters."

"One can always say there is a coach there," said Scheinhold, without lifting his head.

"It used to belong to Mr. Nissen. When we went bankrupt he gave me the coach to settle his debt to me. I didn't care about selling it, however."

"You *couldn't* sell it," said Pe Ontjes. "I will see it, or else I'll have nothing to do with the raffle."

"Forty tickets," said Tjark, hastily, "at a shilling each. That would get me everything, even a couple of stand-up collars."

"As usual," sighed Jeff, "Tjark is confusing net and gross. I have one suggestion to make about the old lumber—about the coach, I mean—forty shillings for Tjark and forty for me make eighty. Don't waste time in talking, but get the business through." He laid his huge hand on Pe Ontjes' knee. "Just think," he said, "what is Tjark to be?"

Having no alternative to suggest, Pe Ontjes calmed down, and they all set to work, making a memorandum of the ticket-holders in an old notebook, and cutting eighty lots out of cardboard. Then Scheinhold was despatched to go to all the

farmers round about Hilligenlei and say it was a question of getting the grandson of a poor widow started in a decent profession. Any questions asked about the condition of the coach must be answered "with caution." The painful thing was that not one of those present bought a ticket. Kai had no money. Pe Ontjes said he was not going to sink any capital in such a shady undertaking. Jeff declared that, as owner of the coach, he was doing more than anyone else; nobody could expect him to give cash as well. Nissen, the baker, who happened to pass, and was called in, was willing enough to take a ticket on condition that he only paid if his was the winning number—a proposal that was rejected by three to two. Scheinhold, however, did take a ticket, and paid ready money for it. He then started off.

For four days, now with, now against, the bitter March wind, he ran round Hilligenlei, came home sober every evening, and by the evening of the fourth day had exactly the eighty shillings in his pocket. Jeff took forty. With the other forty in his pocket, and Tjark in his slippers by his side, Pe Ontjes went to Lammann, the tailor, and ordered a suit of clothes, saying, distinctly, that they were to be for Tjark here, since the tailor had the reputation of making all suits rather after his own figure—he being short and bow-legged.

They had then to consider how to approach the mayor, it being no joke to manage a tall, handsome man like Daniel Peters.

At last Scheinhold offered to undertake this part of the business also, if he were given three days to do it in. Pe Ontjes was very eager to get the matter settled off, for when spring came and the warm weather neither Jeff nor Scheinhold could be relied upon for anything. Jeff was irresistibly drawn to fishing-rods and flounder-nets, Scheinhold to the brandy flask and tramping. All winter he would work under Jeff in the Hilligenlei harbour street, gentle with children, helpful and kind in his ways. But when summer came he was one of the thousand wastrels wandering, lazy and drunken, up and down the long, grey, treeless Holstein roads between Hamburg and Kolding.

For three days Scheinhold, the journeyman, went about as if in a dream, so that Kai and Pe Ontjes began to be afraid, since the weather was growing warm, that his curse was upon him already. They watched him as well as they could. In the

interval they used to run down to the smithy to see if he were there. On the third day they found him not. Kai Jans, however, who was especially troubled about him, heard a monotonous murmur coming from the room behind the bellows where he lived. Jeff came too, and they opened the door softly. There he stood, with his back towards them, bending like a stiff penknife, and saying to the wall, "Most worshipful and honourable Mr. Mayor, this youth whom you see by my side is the grandson of an honest widow, Stiena Dusenschön, of high rank on the mother's side, and, to judge from a postcard which Pe Ontjes Lau has unfortunately destroyed, the son of an educated, though unknown, father. It is therefore little wonder that the youth aims high, namely, at learning the noble craft of writing and penmanship under your worship. A person so undistinguished as myself is of course quite unknown to you. I am a journeyman under Jeff Buhmann, in the harbour street, by name, Adalbert Heinrich Reinhold van der Beeke, called Scheinhold by the little street children, who cannot manage R's."

Jeff closed the door softly, and, sitting down, astounded, on the anvil, said, after a brief silence, "Among all God's creatures this fellow is unique. He's a lover of children, a tippler, a scholar, and a man with a truly magnificent name. What is it? I never knew he had such a magnificent name. One thing is certain — Tjark Dusenschön's affairs could not be in better hands. Daniel Peters cannot resist such an address."

They set off soon after midday — the raffle was to take place afterwards — Scheinhold in front, in Jeff's black evening coat, which reached past his knees, and had to have the sleeves turned up; behind him, to the left, Tjark Dusenschön, in his beautiful new suit, with shining boots, black bowler, and blue tie; farther behind, the street rabble in their wooden shoes; at some distance, Pe Ontjes and Kai. From time to time Tjark regarded them with beaming eyes, saying, "You must remain outside the door."

The two came straight into the office, where they found Daniel Peters sitting at his desk. He rose, as he did to receive any visitor — even a child — so as to give the full impression of his severely handsome presence, and remained standing, stroking his immense, silky moustache, to hear what journeyman Scheinhold had to say to him. His constant subject of lamen-

tation with him was the decay, in our times, of the feeling for rank and authority. Here he found what he sought, and he therefore dismissed them with a gracious inclination of the head.

The clatter of shoes in the Hilligenlei market-place was something unprecedented, even though three boys had theirs in their hands while they ran in their stockings. Never had a more solemn meeting taken place in Jeff's smithy than that which now celebrated the raffle. Tjark had never been so much the centre of his friend's attention as now, when, with sparkling eyes, he shuffled the lots in Jeff's shaky old black slouch hat. Never were such blank faces as when Scheinhold — Scheinhold, the journeyman, and no one else — won the coach. A scene of extraordinary dismay followed.

Pe Ontjes bit his lips and stared gloomily in front of him. Scheinhold sat, quite overcome, on the barrow. He did not hear Tjark whisper to him, "I say, we might raffle the coach again; there are a heap more things I want."

Jeff sat on the anvil, puffing hard at his short pipe, and talking about the tricks of fate.

Suddenly, up got Pe Ontjes, without looking up. "I'm going away, out into the world. Adieu to you all. Never in my life will I have anything more to do with you." And he departed, Tjark also.

Kai wanted to go too, but, since the smith and his journeyman sat on with downcast looks, he stayed, saying, in a subdued tone, "You had better begin to work. Peter Thedeus is anxious for his plough back. Why don't you set to?"

Jeff got up from the anvil, opened the dusty window looking out over towards the harbour, and, drawing a deep breath, said, "Extremely warm outside. Make up the fire, Scheinhold, and we'll get the plough ready. Just look! there's Hinnerk going out to fish for eels. A lot he'll catch, stupid fellow!"

Scheinhold, who was still sitting on the barrow, raised his head to snuff the air. "Extremely warm," he said. "My conscience is much too tender. They will all go and say I cheated in the raffle." He got up stiffly, undid the big door, and looked down the street.

Kai looked anxiously from one to the other, then went up to Scheinhold at the door, and again remarked, in a casual

tone, "You had better begin to work. Make the fire now, Scheinhold."

Jeff had attempted to unscrew the plough, but a different screwdriver was needed, so he came again to the window. "There's Charles Martin sitting there, too, with his net. He isn't catching anything either — far too stupid. It's most gloriously warm; there will be thousands of eels."

"Be off, master, and catch eels," said Scheinhold.

Jeff turned round and said, contemptuously, "Do you think I don't know what time of day it is? You want to be off to your pub to get drunk!"

Kai wanted to jump up and fetch Pe Ontjes, but he was afraid of coming back too late, so he remained standing, staring at the journeyman with terrified eyes. He had known him since he was a child, and was very fond of him.

"I go there? not at all."

He sat still for a time; giving way again, he began to whine, "If only my conscience weren't so tender; — but I can't get over it. It shan't be said that I am a cheat."

Jeff turned away from the window. "I must just see that my net is all right." With these words he went out into the yard.

"I don't feel like work to-day," said Scheinhold, in a thick voice. "I shall just go down to the sadler's and see if he has mended my braces."

Kai seized him by the arm and looked up at him imploringly. "Please, please, don't go."

"What are you thinking about? I am going to the sadler's; do you understand that? Do you suppose a man cares to work for such a lazy master?"

"Do you suppose," said Jeff, through the window, "that a man cares to work when he has such a lazy journeyman? There isn't too much water or too little; it's exactly right. I'm off to the harbour."

"Ha! *water!*" said Scheinhold, shaking himself. "Water, indeed!" He lifted up his hand, bending his fingers as if he had a little glass in them, and smiled happily.

Then Kai came quickly over to him and looked anxiously into his eyes, saying, in a penetrating voice, as if he were addressing a man in his sleep, "Scheinhold — I say, Scheinhold — have you ever heard the story of the blacksmith of Barlt?"

"Don't know," staring out into the street, his eyes like dirty glass.

"He was a blacksmith, like you, and a mad dog bit right into his leg. The dog was quite mad and the wound quite deep. Do you know what the smith did? He bolted the door and worked for three days without stopping, so that the whole smithy was full of bright firelight and huge yellow sparks flew out at the chimney."

"I don't want to hear any stories to-day, kiddie," said Scheinhold, pityingly, getting up as if he had a thousand pounds' weight on each shoulder, and going out into the street.

Kai looked round for Jeff, to see if he could help him, but he was crossing the yard with his net, smoking like a chimney. So he ran down the street after Scheinhold, and, looking up into his face, went on, eagerly, "On the third day the hammering and blasting stopped, and the smith roared like a wild bull."

"Kiddie," stammered Scheinhold, "I don't like your stories at all."

"At last his dear brother took courage. He was a carpenter, and as tall and strong as he. He broke the door open with his axe. There lay the hammer and pincers and files and coal heaped up in the corner, and the blacksmith stood on the hearthstone, foaming and tearing at great chains and bars, with which he had chained himself fast between the hearth and the anvil. And when his brother saw him he said, 'Good for good, dear brother,' and struck him down with his axe, so that he might not torture himself any longer."

Then Scheinhold pushed the boy roughly aside so that he staggered and fell heavily on to the stone. The stout publican with his beautiful, snowy hair, stood in front of his door and laughed. "That's right. Give it him! Come in!" And Scheinhold stumbled across the threshold.

Kai picked himself up and went down the street, breathless and pale as a ghost. He wanted to go home, but Pe Ontjes appeared at the door of his house and said, "I've smashed the shed door; the coach has lost its wheels; the leather is all gone—the man has mended his slippers with it; there's nothing left but the wooden frame and the axles. Scheinhold's winning

is some trick of Tjark's. They're a set of rascals, every one of them. I'm glad I shall be out of it all to-morrow."

He came nearer. When he saw Kai's face he was so terrified that he threw out his hands. "Boy, what is the matter with you?"

Kai breathed once, twice, quick and hard; then, with a miserable cry, he fell down on his knees. Pe Ontjes picked him up in his strong arms and took him up to his mother in the long house. There he lay, whimpering and almost unconscious, on the floor. Pe Ontjes related what had happened, and old Sarah looked in and said how Scheinhold had knocked him down, and the old publican had laughed.

Then said his mother, sadly, "Then I know what's the matter with him. He often used to ask me, when he was a little boy, just gone to school, if it was really true that there were wicked people in the world. He couldn't understand it, and I wasn't clever enough to explain. Now he has seen a mass of evil, all at once, one thing on top of another, and that's what has made him so queer."

"It's a pity," said Pe Ontjes, "that he isn't going off with me. He must go out into the world and see for himself. This sort of thing won't do."

CHAPTER VI.

THE annual fair at Hilligenlei fell upon a beautiful, sunny, September day. There was a clattering of horses and a rumbling of carts on the five roads that led thither, and Harbour-master Lau landed on the pier three boatloads of all sorts of people coming across the bay from Friestadt. Pete Boje was the first to spring ashore, his sister after him. They were tall children by this time, both of them, on the point of being confirmed. Glancing shyly at the long house, they saw Kai Jans standing at the door, and behind him his dainty little mother, no taller than he.

"Come in for a minute," she said, in her friendly way. "Haven't you brought Heinke and Hett with you?"

The two children came in. Tall and slender, with bright, fair hair, they seemed to fill the poor little room, when, after delivering a friendly message from their parents, they looked about them like a couple of wild roes.

"Our house is small enough," said Mala, "and the floor is only made of clay, but it is at least clean. There are the newspapers. I read them on Sunday. I haven't any time in the week. Go up and put on your better coat, Kai. You can go with them to market."

She looked again at the tall, upright children, shyly touching the girl's shoulders. "Look," she said, pointing out the round table with the poor little lamp hanging over it, "that's where he sits every evening, always at his books."

"He must be very clever," said Anna.

"You've seen that, have you?" Mala's eyes did not conceal her secret pride. "Mr. Wieber, the teacher, was here about a week ago, and said what a pity it was Kai couldn't be a schoolmaster. It's impossible; we cannot afford it. He is going to be a compositor. He's learning already under Heine Wulk — goes there every afternoon — and he's quite proud of it. And Heine says he can rise to anything in that profession."

Just think; he wrote a little poem the other day. Heine printed it; he thought it so good. What are you going to be, Pete?"

"After Easter I'm going to the technical school at Itzehoe," he said. "I am going into business."

"I thought you were going to teach," said Mala.

"Teachers don't make enough," he answered, gravely. "A good business man can make a fortune."

In came Kai. She rather fussed round him, asking whether he had a pocket-handkerchief, smoothing down his sleeves to show that his coat was a good one, giving him twopence that lay ready on the window-sill. They should see he had something to spend at the fair. As they went out she motioned to him with her eyes, saying, "Mind you hold yourself up, dear," and pointed to the girl, as upright as a young princess.

When they turned from the harbour street into Church Street they found themselves in the thick of the confused crowd of holiday-makers. Tim Sölte, the little crippled fiddler, was sitting on the ground under the watchmaker's window, fiddling away and nodding his head, his cap on his knees ready for coppers from the passers-by. He lowered his fiddle as the Boje children passed, saying, "Can you change me a shilling, Prince Boje? I've got such a lot of small change."

Pete felt in his purse. "Yes, I can do that." Then after Tim had counted out the amount in halfpence, he gave him the shilling in exchange.

When he came to count it up as he went along he found there were only ten pennies.

"Is it right?" said Anna.

"Yes; quite right," he said, quietly putting the money in his purse. On a sudden impulse, however, he turned on his heel, seized hold of Tim's cap, and said, with sparkling eyes, "You've cheated me, you old rascal. I'd make short work of you if you weren't a cripple."

Looking up at him uneasily the fiddler picked up his instrument as if he had not understood.

On the right, at the corner of the market-place, stood a barrel-organ beside a big canvas depicting, in lurid colours, a horrible murder, the story being chanted in some peculiar dialect by a harsh-voiced female.

Kai looked at it with dilated eyes. "She must have seen it herself," he said.

Pete, more sceptical, declared that the whole thing was a lie. "You can see that the axe doesn't hit him; the man's aim is quite out."

Anna hung back, looking coldly at the woman who sang.

"Let's go to the flower lottery," said Kai. "Every number wins. Look! so it says, 'Every number wins.'"

"You shall have those flowers," he said, staking his whole twopence. The wheel turned, but the pointer stopped between two numbers.

"Unluckily it isn't a number," said the man, looking away from the children. "Come, ladies and gentlemen. Every number wins!"

"That's enough of that," said Kai, turning away with scarlet face.

"And you've lost all your money," said Anna.

"I'll get more," he said.

Then they all went to the puppet show, and stood looking at it for a long while. Every time that Anna gave her short, low laugh, he was happy; it was such a delightful sound. He looked sideways at her little white face and asked her more than once whether she enjoyed it.

"It's very silly," she said, "but I do enjoy it all the same."

When he saw the showman's wife coming round with the plate he said, in an important tone, that he must go to his printing for an hour or two, arranging to meet them two hours later outside the Hamburg Arms.

As he sat in Heine Wulk's dirty, deserted workshop, printing a few belated fair-bills, a faint thunderstorm, rising from the south-west, passed over after a slight shower of rain, followed hard by a tremendous gale. Peals of thunder resounded on sea and land, and vivid flashes of lightning darted across the sky with the rapidity of the angry strokes of a whip. The air was darkened far and wide by swirling clouds of dust collected everywhere on the roads and lanes by the long drought, and now caught up and mingled with sand from the dunes. The storm swept over Hilligenlei and the bay, and was gone as quickly as it came, though across at the Friestadt side dazzling flashes continued to dart across the big, dark-blue clouds.

Released about five o'clock, Kai soon heard that the storm had had fatal results in and near the town. A young couple had been struck down by lightning on their way to their first

dance since their wedding. A number of children had been buried by the dust in the fields, and only saved with great difficulty. A carriage had been crushed against the wall of a house. Crossing the market-place, he caught sounds of an accident on the Friestadt wall. The name was Schoolmaster Boje. The Friestadt farmer, when questioned, could only tell him that nothing certain was known, and that Pete was already on his way home.

He went at once to look for Anna — looked and asked for her everywhere in vain. The neighbours could give him no news of her. No one had seen her. He went about asking everyone he knew whether they had seen a tall, upright girl, about fourteen or fifteen, with a small, pale face and loose, straight, fair hair. His cheeks glowed with excitement, and he almost imagined himself in charge of some royal child which had lost its way in a strange town. He had made himself quite hot with running, when he came upon her at last in the little garden with its few tables and benches in the sun. She was sitting on one of these benches in her long, blue dress, the little straw hat well forward on her forehead, looking, with hot face and rather untidy hair and eyes big with astonishment, at Tjark Dusenschön, who stood in front of her in his tight trousers and blue tie, running his hand indolently through the exquisite waves of his fair hair, saying, "It would be a very great pleasure to me indeed to introduce you to our little dancing-club, and my influence there is considerable."

When she saw Kai Jans she looked at him with her calm eyes, saying, "Dusenschön belongs to a dancing-club. Do you dance?"

He looked gravely at her. "Do you know, dear," he said, "Pete has heard a report of your father's being unwell. He has gone home with a neighbour."

Her delicate little face underwent a sudden change. Getting up, she came over to his side.

"There's no boat for some time. Shall I take you home round the bay?"

She nodded.

"Then let us be off."

Tjark went with them down Church Street, his tie blowing about; his lips were tightly pressed together, and at every step he put down his right knee with such force that he almost

seemed to limp with the left. The step and the expression were imitated from the mayor's, adopted two years ago in heroic endurance of an attack of gout. When they came down to the harbour street he politely took his leave, saying that the mayor had entrusted to him the maintenance of order, and he must go and inspect the stall-holders.

Kai Jans ran up to tell his mother what had happened, and then, as the light began to fade, left the town with Anna. They came out on the high road leading up to the higher ground, and then took a narrow turning to the right with high walls on either side, overhung with hazel and hawthorn bushes and oak-trees, growing very close together. Darkness came on.

He was proud of his commission, and began to talk to cheer her and shorten the way, although he was naturally one of those silent people whose spirits are stirred by the deep mysteries of which one can only speak to intimates.

This evening to this dear listener he did speak, telling her what he had never told anyone — how his father had lain ill for eight weeks with pneumonia, and then been unable to work half the winter; how his mother used to weep because they often had not a penny in the house; how she had had to go and get things on credit from that dreadful, stout publican, and his father had to go there every Sunday afternoon, drink brandy, and smoke a cigar, both of which he disliked. Perhaps in the autumn his old grandmother — his mother's stepmother — would come to them. She was old and weak, and his father didn't want her to come on the parish. "In the evenings, when I come home from the printer's, I am often fearfully tired, but mother's crying keeps me from going to sleep."

"Don't your sisters earn anything?"

"Father won't hear of their paying for board on any account, for fear of their being so dreadfully poor if they were to marry."

"Yes," she said. "I know. We're poor, too. Father has still his student debts to pay — think of that. However, that doesn't matter."

"She poor!" he thought. "She knows nothing about it. A teacher," he thought, "must be rich." Their conversation next turned on the confirmation, and he said, "Do you know

half the boys don't believe what the clergyman says? Does Pete believe it?"

She shook her head, and he could see in the dim light that her brows were knitted in thought. "He certainly wouldn't be confirmed if the clergyman could only hear the things he says to the boys and girls. He doesn't believe a word. The other day we were looking on the stone bridge for earth-worms — the long sort, you know — for fishing. He looked up and saw the sky full of stars."

"It was night, then?"

She looked at him in astonishment. "Rather! you aren't so stupid as not to know that earth-worms only come out at night? We had got out of the window to hunt for them —"

"In your nightgowns?"

"Yes, in our nightgowns. He looked at the stars and said, 'Just look! there are more than fifty million stars. Do you suppose that nothing lives on them? Has God had fifty million sons? I don't believe what the clergyman says. I don't believe it, and I don't need it. I'm a good enough sort of person without, and I know what I want.' That's what he said. Isn't it dreadful?"

"You believe, though, don't you?" said Kai.

"Yes. I believe it all because the clergyman says so." She was silent for a time, looking straight in front of her. "Do you know what often troubles me? God is three in one. Well, what frightens me is that I am often so tired at night that I don't get the order right. I'm sure I pray least to the Holy Ghost, and He must be angry with me."

"The thing to do," he said, "is to begin with God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, before you say your prayer; then you have them all in right order."

Everything seemed clear. "Oh, yes!" said she. "How clever of you. Do you know, they say you're a wonderful boy and the cleverest in the school!"

His joy at hearing her speak to him thus sent his heart up into his throat, and he walked by her side in silence.

The birds, sitting in the hedges between the heavy raindrops, watched the two as they passed out of their steady, black eyes. The moon shone from behind the clouds across the calm sky.

On the horizon lay a bank of dark-grey cloud, and, beyond, thunder rumbled in the distance.

"We must make haste," he said; "there's going to be another thunderstorm."

They came down from the high ground and passed through a silent village, the thatched roofs like so many dark patches beneath the black shade of the trees. Only across one garden there was a light to be seen, as the door shut softly on some remark they could not hear—evidently a neighbour going home after an evening visit. Suddenly the street was lit up by a flash of lightning. He stood in the middle of the road, a tall man, his broad shoulders a trifle bent. Immediately afterwards, at the cross-roads in the middle of the village, a little pony-carriage came towards them, with two children, a boy and girl, sitting close together inside, and a small mongrel running behind. They could plainly see the children's eyes full of silent inquiry.

"What a lot of people there are on the road to-night," said Kai Jans.

The flash and the appearance of the carriage had so confused them for the moment that they took a wrong turning at the cross-roads, and came out on to the heath without noticing it, as they talked of the rapidly rising storm now hanging dark and heavy over the water.

It was not until after a quarter of an hour or more that they saw from the rising of the road that they were out of their way. At first they tried to get back by cutting across the heath. A mighty roar came from the sea, as if a number of heavy vessels were breaking their way through the ice-bound waters and being cast heavily on the beach. The roar of the wind and the slashing of the rain sounded like the uneasy movement of wet sails.

Without a word they took each other's hands and made their way back, full of fears, towards a light they saw on the road just beyond the village. Crossing the tiny garden on tiptoe, they stood still by the wall, near the light; so that they at least had people near them. As they stood thus the window close to them was thrown open. A big, bearded man of middle age put out his head, and, looking up to the sky, said, in a nervous tone, "Look out there, mother: half the sky has fallen in!"

A comfortable old voice replied, "That will make an end of

the sparrows, that's all. Look round about, though. I thought I heard footsteps."

The man looked round. "There's a child standing there, and there's another," he said.

They stood stock still meantime. Then the old woman opened the dark, low door, and, saying "Come in, children; don't be afraid; come in," led the way into the low-roofed room. "Sit down, children," she said; then, turning to her son, "Run and see if there's any coffee left in the kitchen. He's a bit queer in his ways," she went on, "especially when it thunders. One winter night, when he was a soldier, he was thrown from his horse, and nearly perished of cold, but he wouldn't harm a soul. Sit down, children; don't be frightened. I tell him a story, and then he forgets the thunder and everything else." After asking where they had come from and whither they were going, "As soon as the thunder's over he'll take you across the heath by the footpath, and you'll be in Friestadt in half an hour from there."

A sudden flash of lightning filled the room with white light, and the thunder was like huge rocks crashing through the sky. The heath seemed to shake under the impact of the falling stars.

The old woman saw to the door and then sat down again. Her son came back from the kitchen with a face as white as chalk, and fell on his knees in front of her as if all the strength had gone out of him. "Mother, it fell on my skull; it has gone right into my head."

"Then, my child," she said, stroking his hair, grey in spite of his youth, "we must put in a story to fill it up and make it well again. Listen, children. Once upon a time, about seven hundred years ago — be still, my son, be still — the Bishop of Hamburg passed one day right past our windows — do you hear? — on his way to Hilligenlei, and, stopping his stout pony on the high ground in front of our house, he looked down at the wide landscape at his feet with here and there a line of grey sea visible, the low Hilligenlei downs, dotted with thatched roofs, the wall of his new church he was building standing up as high as a mast. But the sight gave him no joy. As a young man he had fought hard for the faith, but now that he was growing old he hated anything rough and incomplete. When he came to the solid stone house that the priests had built be-

side the unfinished church he found the table laid. There was a pudding bigger than his head, and a pig's cheek, on which they made great inroads. He sat down and ate enormously. A whole day in the sea wind had given him an appetite. After a bit he let out his leather belt and ate more, eating all the time while he listened to the priests' complaints of the laziness and obstinacy of the people. When he got up next morning he complained that he had slept badly, disturbed by fearful dreams that seemed sent by evil spirits — visions of beings with large round, white faces, void of all expression. It was with an irritated spirit that he went into the church. There, in the unfinished buildings, stood some three or four hundred men and women, the yellow sand of the dune under their feet, the open sky over their heads, listening, with their eyes fixed devoutly on the grey stone table, to the words the holy man uttered in his unfamiliar speech. His homely goodness appealed to them, and his face was of the type that the people there have always most admired, especially in their priests: the almost harsh manhood that speaks of brave deeds and deep thoughts. Then the Bishop left the table and came down to question them individually according to the Lord's Prayer and the Catechism. The answers were hesitating, and his irritation returned. As he came down the church he saw standing to the left by the unfinished pillars a lanky youth with straight, sleek, fair hair, and strongly marked features. Over his woollen shirt he carried a pocket, made out of one piece of sealskin. When the little priest who followed the Bishop perceived this man he said, rapidly, in a low voice, 'Hoc est asinus ferocissimus.' The Bishop turned round. 'Hic, hic, my brother,' he said, crossly. Then turning to the man he said, in dialect, 'What is the name of our Lord's mother, my son?' 'Mary is her name,' he answered, cheerfully. The Bishop's irritation grew. 'And his father, my son?'

"The young man saw the trap, and was on his guard. 'Is that Joseph?' he said, reflecting, 'or our Lord himself?'

"The Bishop got angry. 'Our Lord, of course,' he said. 'And she was all his life?'

"His wife.'

"Fool,' said the Bishop, his wrath blazing forth; 'she remained a virgin.'

"Thereupon the young man struck his hand on his forehead in genuine bewilderment. 'Not really!' he said.

"The Bishop, no longer able to contain himself, raised his hand and gave him a heavy box on the ear. The man drew himself up. As pale as death, he stared straight in front of him, and, without moving his eyes, broke off a piece from the pillar — you can see the place still — let it fall into the sand, and, dropping his hand again, turned round and left the church. For three hours he walked westwards, till he came to the green hillock by the ever-roaring sea, where his reed hut stood. He spoke no word to his wife; he did not play with his little boy. When evening came and the light faded, taking his axe from the hearth, he went back the way he had come in the morning, running, without stopping to rest, over the wide, white sand, over the wide green plain, through the deep water-courses, till, about midnight, he reached the Hilligenlei down and the priest's house. All the time his resolution never wavered. He was going to kill the holy man. The back door was not bolted. He went along the passage till he came to another door through which he could hear the voice of the holy man speaking to himself. Craning his neck, he peered through the chink of the door into the room. There he was, kneeling in the moonlight, praying in some strange tongue, and every sentence he paused to think. Suddenly, after the fifth, he began to think aloud. He struck the table, and said, in a loud, angry voice, 'That I was so mad as to box his great ear! It was yesterday's pudding and pork that did it, and that confounded busybody who stood behind me. Dear Lord and Blessed Saviour and Mary Mother, forgive me my sins and soften his hard heart.'

"The man with the axe turned round, stole out of the house on tiptoe, and ran home, without stopping, over sand and grass and water, his lips pressed tight together and his eyes sparkling. At the door she was waiting for him. She took the axe and ran her finger along the edge, looking at him with uneasy gaze. But he spread out his arms, drew a deep breath, and laughed out uproariously. 'He is not a holy man at all; he has a stomach-ache.'

"Now, although the people all called themselves Christians, they were surprised and angry that he did not kill the Bishop. Even one of the priests, who was a native of these parts, grieved when he thought that the holy man might thus have

attained a martyr's crown thereby, although the thought made his hair stand on end. They despised him, one and all, until the Frisian invasion gave him an opportunity of showing magnificent courage; and from that time they learnt how to praise the mild justice he had shown before."

The old woman removed her hands from her son's head, and he stood up, lost in dreaming thoughts, at the side of the stove. Anna Boje had gone to sleep during the story, her head on her arms, and her pretty, fair hair spread out all over the table. Kai, with his elbows on the table, was still gazing at the old woman out of his dark-gray eyes.

"Do you see?" she said to her son.

His thoughts were like children playing in the dark. "What does it mean?" he said, uttering his thoughts. "Are there no saints now? no holy men?"

"No," said the old woman, shaking her head, "not a single one. It's all mixed up in men now—holy and unholy together. There are none all holiness. Look out, Hans, and see if the sky is clear again."

He went to the window and said, in genuine astonishment, "The stars are all there again."

"Yes; I thought so," she said. "Now take the children to the road. Wake up, girlie; you're off again now."

He led them across the heath, and at its edge, without a word, he left them. Silently, they clambered down the defile into the flat ground, and were soon once more on the narrow footpath that led to Friestadt, the straight line of the dyke appearing on their right.

When they were close to the village, by the mill, Anna looked up, frightened, and still half-asleep. "All the houses are lit up—ours, too. Why is it? There's a light in the schoolroom, too!" She burst into tears, and began to run.

"What has happened?" asked Kai of a man on the road.

"The schoolmaster tried to stop a heavy cart that was coming along the sea wall during the storm. A child had got under the wheels, and the driver was drunk. The weight was too much for him, and he fell right into the sea. They have just brought him home."

Anna burst through the crowd of mud-bespattered men in the hall and schoolroom, to her mother, who stood by the desk, quite overcome. Pete, also covered from head to foot

with wet, gray mud, stood beside the dead body of his father. Hella Boje gave a loud cry of joy when she saw her child. "You are safe," she cried, "darling child, you are safe." She caught the big girl on to her knees and covered her face with kisses. "At least I have all my children. Where are Hett and Heinke?"

"In the bedroom," said Pete, in a steady, restrained voice.

Hans Martin, the parish overseer, said, in his harsh voice, "His death comes too early for his family. He had paid off a good seventy-five pounds of his college debts, but fifty pounds is still due — I stood his surety as a neighbour."

Hella Boje looked up questioningly. She had only half heard. But Pete got in front of the overseer, and, striking himself on the breast, cried out, "I — I will set it right. I will."

"All right, little neighbour," said Martin. "That is not how I meant it."

"You did mean that," cried Pete, striking himself again. "I will — I will set everything to rights." Then turning to his mother, "Never mind, mother; you've got me. Everything will be all right."

Hella laid her arm round him and said once more, "Where are Heinke and Hett?"

"In the bedroom. Yes; let us go there. We cannot do anything for father now."

Kai Jans had remained standing at the door, his head erect, horror in his eyes. In the light cast by the lanterns which the men now lifted as they made room, he saw the dead man lying in the midst of the disordered schoolroom, the beautiful head, still young, bent helplessly back; the fair mother, with her face contracted by pain, and her garments in disorder; Pete and Anna, quite changed from their ordinary peaceful expression. As he saw all this he turned round as if seized upon by some force outside himself and ran, ran home, stopping breathless for a moment, only to start off and run once more, weeping in a maze of confused anguish as the wretched picture burnt itself into his soul and his mind wrestled helplessly with his disordered thoughts.

It was morning when he reached home. Hot and perspiring, he gave his mother a broken and stammering account of what had happened. She went into the kitchen and sat down

in front of the fire. He stood before her. "It is appalling," he said, "appalling."

"Yes," she said, "yes; it is appalling. What will become of her and the children? The pension is tiny, and they have debts. Pete will have to give up school."

"That's not the worst," he said. "Pete will manage that; it's the other."

"What?" said his mother.

"Mother," said he. "Only think. If the driver had not been drunk! He was saved, and Mr. Boje and the child drowned. Think of the struggle the Bojes will have all their lives now, just because of that man's being drunk! It's all wrong."

She looked at him. His eyes blazed in his pale face. "That's how the world is," said she.

"Yes. But I tell you it shall *not* be so. The woman at Heesedorf may say, 'There are no holy men,' but there *shall* be some. All men *shall* be holy."

"Get to work, my boy," said she, coldly; "that will put an end to your brooding."

"Oh! mother," he said, looking at her anxiously, "yes; but if that must be so for me, I couldn't stop thinking of it. I think till my head will one day break with thinking."

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Kai Jans came in, Heine Wulk was sitting in the musty old office, grey with accumulated dust, in front of the long, dirty table littered with cuttings, scissors, writing materials of every sort, and heaps of newspapers, his pasty face buried in his Berlin correspondence. The boy, who had shot up into a tall, pale-faced youth, went straight to his accustomed place, and began to set up the advertisements which had come in. He had come from six hours at school, but in a week he would leave school and devote his whole time to the firm.

"I say," said Heine, smoothing down his long, sleek hair to the collar of his coat. "A magnificent leader from the Berlin man again, on the coming of spring; but in one place he talks of dragon-flies playing round the water-lilies. What does he mean? I've never heard of dragon-flies!"

"They're what we call devil's darning-needles," said Kai.

"So, ho! that's what it is; but we can't talk about devil's darning-needles in a leader. Dragon-flies it must be; it's a fine word, anyhow. You must alter a word here and there, Kai—for example, when he talks of lasses and lads you had better say girls and boys, d'you see? But don't spoil the swing of the thing; that's the great point, after all—swing and go. You're getting on finely, but there's still room for improvement, as I'm always saying. Look at the mayor. There's style for you. And further down, where the Berlin man—it's very fine on the whole, of course—but where he talks of the 'sun's shy beams' you can add that the hens are beginning to lay again. He's stupidly left that out."

Kai looked at the passage. "It does not go very well there," he said, meditatively.

"In it must go, for all that," said Heine Wulk. "Don't you see, if a farmer sees that, ten to one he'll try an advertisement and pay with eggs. I've often done quite a good

thing in that way at this time of year. Well, tell me any news in the town. Have you heard any?"

"Skipper Tams has bought a smack in Finkenwärder. That's the fifth in Hilligenlei, and Harbourmaster Lau says a fine smack too."

"What of that?" said Wulk. "Anyone can buy a smack!"

"Pe Ontjes Lau has got distinction in his pilot's examination in Altona."

"I don't like Lau. What's that to do with Hilligenlei, either?"

"The drain in Church Street has been choked up since yesterday evening. The bad water has run out into the streets, and has no outlet."

Heine shook his head vigorously. "What's the good of our putting that in? It would annoy the mayor and set the policemen against me. No. We'll have nothing to do with that. Anything else?"

"Dickson, the merchant, has found the betrothal ring that he lost in his garden twenty years ago."

"Now that is really interesting. That will go in nicely. These little traits of human life are what we want, don't you know."

"Birnbaum, the publican, has put out a bottle full of peas and offered a dozen of beer for the best guess at the number."

"That will do nicely. There is what you call humour in that. You can make a clever thing of that by working it up a bit—plenty of go, of course—showing how ingeniously contrived the idea is on Birnbaum's part, and how, by promoting friendly intercourse in this way, he is contributing to the healthy activities of the town, and with a verse or two, if you are in the mood—some sort of poetical motto. So get to work. You ought to be pleased, my boy, to be at the centre of things at your age! Well, be diligent. I will run down to the town and see if there is any more news."

Heine Wulk drew on his old overcoat, and, plunging both hands in its huge, gaping pockets, made his way first to Birnbaum's, where he drank a glass of grog and had his estimate of the number of the peas noted down, then on to the other public houses. After exchanging a few words with the citizens lounging and grumbling there, he returned to his office.

Kai Jans had in the meantime set up the two articles and read part of a novel sent in in yellow backed numbers by a Berlin firm, in order to decide whether it was worth reproducing. He was now occupied in setting up the programme of a variety entertainment. Heine squinted towards the galley where he ought to have been working, but, too lazy even to take off his overcoat, sank down into his comfortable chair by the table and picked up the Hamburg paper.

In came the Bojes' neighbour, Anna Wiesche Martin from Friestadt, filling the office with her portly person. Putting down her basket on the long table, she said, "We've got a cow for sale, Heine. Will you put in a short advertisement?" Then, taking a small packet of butter out of the basket, "I've brought a pound of butter for you; we're rather short of cash."

"It's a great nuisance," said Heine, "that no one pays in cash. I don't mind taking the butter, and I shouldn't have anything to say against half a sack of potatoes. Last autumn, when pigs were so cheap that Hans Hansen let five run about the market-place, Jacob Sothmann thought he would do me by giving me a pig for the notice of his wife's death. However, the price rose, and I was all right. But just look here in this corner." He pulled back a goatskin. "Have you any use for that? Come here, Kai, my boy, and look in here. If you ever get on to a big paper, think of what you may collect! One must have an all-round education! Look here! children's clothes." He felt in a big, soft heap. "The merchants are the worst of all."

"All rubbish," said Anna, shaking her head. "I must go on — oh, yes!" she stopped. "I wanted to tell you School-master Boje's wife is coming across by the afternoon boat. She is going to move into Hilligenlei, and wants a little house — three rooms — so that she can take in a schoolboy as a boarder — a low rent."

Heine, lost in his reflections on barter, shook his head. Anna departed.

She had only just gone when Kassen Wedderkop came in, big and heavy. A Hilligenleiman by birth, he had travelled all over the world and spent years in Eastern Asia in the employ of an old-established Hamburg firm. When he was forty he received an injury to his spine which made him an invalid and obliged him to give up his profession. Returning

with a modest competency to his native town, he had begun, tentatively at first, to write articles on commerce and commercial policy. He soon realized that his gifts fitted him better for the theory than the practice of commerce, and now, ten years after his return, he was a writer of repute on important English and German papers. He had no friends in Hilligenlei; people did not know him. Grave and taciturn in manner, he went about lost in thought. His voice, when he did speak, was a loud bass.

Now, supporting his short, thick-set figure heavily on a crutch, he asked, in his usual dry and entirely practical manner, for a particular back year of the newspaper in which, as he had recently learnt, his father had given an account of his honourable career.

Heine, who could not bear him, gave him the paper, and Wedderkop went to the window where Kai stood at his work. He looked attentively at the tall, pale youth, whom he had met from time to time in the street; then, sitting down heavily, he began to read, groaning from time to time, a habit which he had.

All sorts of people came in. A woman whose ill-fed, untidy children played in the streets, ordered confirmation cards. The sexton brought the church notices. Then came the mayor.

"Oh! his worship!" said Heine, bowing low.

Daniel Peters gave Wedderkop a distant nod. Pulling up his light trousers, he took his seat with dignity. "I had not much time for the article," he said. "The care of the town leaves one no rest, day or night."

"It is fearful," said Heine, smoothing down his hair, "to think what your worship might have been could you have put the pound that God has given you out at interest."

"Yes," said Daniel Peters, stroking his long, silky moustache. "One is used to the full as an official. Life goes by. But enough of that. I will read you what I have written."

"Put down your work, Kai—listen with all your ears."

Daniel Peters laid his hand on his knee and read, with raised shoulders and contracted throat—all Hilligenlei folk raise their shoulders and contract their throats when they want to say something important—"Title, 'The Future of the Town of Hilligenlei.'"

"Our sea, the murderous North Sea, is wonderful—mur-

derous in its wrecks, North in contradistinction to the English name of German Ocean — most wonderful of all when it is not there at all, when it presents us puny mortals with its vast expanse of sand, and invites us all, citizens of Hilligenlei, from magistrate to labourer, to go forth to the Danish sandbank. And why thither? Is the question just? No, no; and yet again no. There, in the Danish sandbank, over which the sea comes gliding up, lies the hope of the good old town of Hilligenlei, so often sorely tried. Our readers know what we mean. Every man who is a true citizen — and, thank Heaven! there are still many such — knows that. It was in the year of our Lord 1813. In that year His Gracious Majesty, now, alas! long since gathered to his fathers, had despatched to Glückstadt a ship laden with three hundred thousand florins for the use of His Majesty's army. Was it by the effect of merely natural causes? No! As Christians, faithful adherents to our early faith, we say it was by the will of a wise and gracious God that the ship, driven by a mighty storm into our bay, sank with all on board, and was swallowed up at once in the sandy depths below. And the will of God was shown in this also, that He directed the heart of His Gracious Majesty to grant that if ever the ship should be recovered, its cargo should belong to the town of Hilligenlei. Behold! God uses the forces of Nature for the service of His creatures. Having determined to help this town, He has brought it about that in the last ten years, since the present mayor, Daniel Peters, has directed the affairs of our community, the sandbank has been gradually dissolving. As the poet says, 'Fate has yet some golden day in store.' The ship will come to light, and Hilligenlei be a Holyland, as its name foretells. Now, well administered, true to the faith of his fathers, it will then be also freed from the burden of debt. And yet, although God's goodness has been thus vouchsafed to us, some people are not satisfied. From one year's end to the other they are for ever agitating to have the harbour stream cut straight for the sake, forsooth! of some fifteen wrecked crabfishermen, plying their trade in miserable crafts, or the twenty smacks that come into port. Supposing that their numbers did increase in consequence of the widening of the harbour! Do we want that? Do we want more intercourse? more life? more population? Do we want a second newspaper, for example, to carp and

criticize in present-day fashion? What should we gain? We live peacefully here. We want none of the subverters of State and Church. Alas that, as it is, we are not wholly without them. As it is they lurk among us, polluting our Holyland. We know their names and their comings and goings."

Daniel Peters drew a deep breath and stroked his long, silky moustache. Heine, deeply impressed, said, in a low tone of great solemnity, "There, Kai; there's style for you. I hope you took it all in. There's a model for you — an ideal. Put the article in type straight away. I will come with you, your worship."

They went out together without taking any notice of Wedderkop. Kai returned to his work.

After a time Wedderkop looked up again from his newspaper. It seemed to him that there lay behind those deep-set, serious eyes a wondering spirit, strangely mature in such a boy, that looked out with the timid eagerness with which the heart of a high-born maiden turns to her lover, trembling lest he should not prove worthy. His mouth was firmly cut and his chin broad. "What a strong, beautiful face," he thought.

"That's a good piece of work of the mayor's," he said in his loud voice.

"Yes," answered Kai, rather startled; "he writes well."

"His ideas are clever," thundered Wedderkop.

"He is a very clever man," said Kai, intelligently. "He could be in the Government if he liked, I expect, if he did not sacrifice himself for the sake of Hilligenlei."

Wedderkop opened his eyes still wider. "You learn a lot here, I suppose?"

"Rather," said Kai, emphatically. "Mr. Wulk is so good in letting me do a lot of work for myself."

"For example?"

The proud red in his pale cheeks contradicting his modest manner, Kai gave an account of his share in the leading articles. "Quite recently, the first article I have written all by myself was published — the story of the bishop and the countryman. Perhaps you read it."

"It was you, then," said Wedderkop, "who sheltered at the old woman's in Heesedorf on the night of the storm. I have heard the old lady tell the story myself."

"She tells it quite plainly. I have improved it."

Kassen Wedderkop looked at him attentively and nodded. The young artist had made the countryman a spiritless fellow and the bishop a perfect madman, and added all sorts of meaningless detail. "Yes; you improved it! Where are you in school?"

"I have been in the top form for the last two years."

Kassen Wedderkop got up, groaning, and began to move away. "If you care to," said he, "to-morrow morning, being Sunday, you might come and see me about ten o'clock. Bring the newspapers for the last quarter with you, do you hear? Yes; bring them with you."

Nearer acquaintance with this man, whom Heine Wulk and the mayor dismissed with such contempt, filled Kai with considerable respect. He looked up at his bulky figure with a certain timidity and promised to come.

Next morning Kai found Kassen Wedderkop at home in his house outside the town, busy making notes on a block that rested on the arm of his chair from the portentous foreign newspapers and reviews that he was reading. He groaned heavily from time to time, rather from the dull sensation of oppression in his back than in actual pain.

"Sit down, my boy," he said, "and don't be frightened if I speak rather loud. I got into the habit in Korea, where I was for a long time and everyone is hard of hearing. It's a great, open country. That's right. I see you've brought the papers."

He took up the first and, without any further remark, began to read aloud in his tremendous, droning voice, making short remarks from time to time. Kai sat on the edge of a chair, cap in hand, looking straight in front of him, growing first red and then paler and paler.

"Just look at this sentence — there. You see how utterly absurd that is? And here, further on — here are three sentences of which two are quite superfluous and the third is drivelling. And here — just listen to this — Look at that stuff with those quiet, intelligent eyes of yours and tell me what you think of it? Yes, I should rather think so. Here's some more. That's true enough, but only half a truth — the rest of it is lunacy, stark lunacy, and the conclusion is fatuous.

As a matter of fact, the truth is — You know that well enough yourself."

He went through two or three entire newspapers, sentence by sentence, in this way. When he came to any article by Heine Wulk or the mayor, "Nonsense," he said; "wretched rubbish! It's all a mass of nonsensical lies. The amount of harm these people do with their newspapers is fearful. People drink in all this gas — this tall talk about nothing, this self-satisfied patriotism — and think it so splendid that they go and make a faith out of it. They think by it, speak by it, write by it, and the result is that, through the newspaper, their whole lives are made a lie. Have you no eyes? Don't you see all the lying, all the pretence, there is in Hilligenlei?"

Kai sat motionless on the edge of his chair, staring at his cap without seeing it. He was deathly pale. All his gods were falling from their thrones and turning to ridiculous puppets before his eyes.

The story of the bishop came next. Kassen Wedderkop took it up and pulled off all the fine plumage in which Kai had decked it out, feather by feather, showing him the simple beauty of its original form. Kai's lips twitched and his hands trembled.

"It's all nonsense, my boy — your whole existence — stuff and nonsense. I know you're right-minded and sensible enough at bottom. I thought, when I saw you in that filthy office, 'That's a true Saxon; he won't follow other people; he will think things out for himself.' The inside is right enough, but, Good Lord! the outside! A windbag, that's what you are — a windbag. Do you understand? You ought to be thoroughly ashamed of yourself."

Kai leapt to his feet and looked at the terrible man with agonized eyes. "I know that you are right," he said. "You don't need to say any more to me," and he darted out of the door.

He ran out into the fields, not knowing what to do with his life. It was like having been lifted up into the air and then not knowing what field to fall on to when he could hold aloft no longer. How often he had boasted to his parents of his wonderful doings at the office, giving them to understand that the mayor looked upon him with favour, and he was somebody already in the town. When he was mayor, as he well might

be one day, he would see that Hilligenlei was really a Holyland. How they had listened, their eyes full of quiet happiness; his father smiling a little in his joking way over his son's projects, but pleased enough; and his mother — she believed every word. His face grew hot with shame. He groaned as he ground his teeth together.

No, no! Hilligenlei was no Holyland. He saw that plainly enough now. He knew it well enough now. There was nothing holy in it. It was a Bedlam — a Bedlam full of lies and deceit. He had been blind. He had not known what holiness meant. He did not know the world, that was what it was. Now he must learn to know it. A smith has to understand his hammer. A man must know the world if he is to be any good at all. Know the world? To do that he must get away from Hilligenlei and go to Hamburg. Hamburg was in the world: Hamburg was the world: there he would go into a really big printing-office: the great thing was that he could open his eyes there and get to know the world.

He got up and went slowly towards the town as if his feet were weighed down with lead. In the harbour street he saw Anna and Pete Boje coming up from the pier and wanted to get out of the way, but their keen eyes had perceived him, and they called to him with their clear voices. They told him that they were on their way to the park: their mother had taken a house in Chestnut Row and they were going to look at it. They went up together, counting the pleasant-looking, red-gabled houses built in a straight row under the chestnuts by the moat till they came to an empty one without any curtains: that was the one. It was a slip of a house, one story high, the smallest in the row; downstairs the door and a window on either side, one window in the gable. They went in, along the narrow passage that led out into the garden: looking into the rooms, and out of the kitchen window. It was a very small garden, but it had an apple-tree and a strip of grass for drying at the end, and a little gate opening on to the pleasant lane leading between the gardens back into the town.

The children inspected and considered everything with a wisdom beyond their years, pronouncing it very satisfactory. Anna especially was loud in her praise.

"The kitchen is my province," she said, pressing her forehead against the window. Then looking into the bedroom,

"I shall sleep there, and the two boarders from the cathedral school upstairs, and I will look after them."

"What will your brother do?" said Kai.

They exchanged looks, then Pete said quickly, "Mother has bought a knitting machine; father left debts — sixty pounds — that have to be paid off."

"We don't mind telling *you*," said Anna. "Mother wanted Pete to go to the technical school at Itzehoe, but that would have meant her working ever so hard at the old knitting machine. So it's settled Pete is going to begin earning straight off; he's going to sea in four weeks — to Hongkong — just think!"

Kai looked at Pete; there was a new expression in the open face, the earnestness of a set purpose that has counted the cost and is not afraid.

An idea came into his mind, possessed it with irresistible force. Suppose he were to go out into the wide world as a sailor? Pe Ontjes was a sailor. Pete was going to be one. Why shouldn't he? He no longer saw or heard what the others were doing. . . . A strange coast, what sort of people live there? are they holy or not? Somewhere, somewhere in the wide world there must be a Holyland — if there is not life is a strangely meaningless affair. . . . Well, the only thing was to search, ask the people. What sort of people live there? What is their manner of life? And to go right round the world searching and asking; only so could one get to know the world, and somewhere in the world one must surely find the Holyland. When he had found it, then he would come back home and make . . . He no longer saw or heard what the others were doing; lost in his own thoughts, his own dreams, he walked silently beside them; in the harbour street he shook hands and left them.

When he came into the low little room at home he found his parents sitting at dinner with his three sisters and his little brother; there were pieces of potato all over the table, a saucer with a few wretched ends of bacon in the middle; that was their dinner. The hard frost had kept Thomas Jans out of work for seven weeks.

"Father," he said, at the door. "Pete Boje is going to sea. I want to go too. Don't ask me whether it is right: I know it is right. Father, I must go!"

They turned pale, and silence fell upon them. They looked down, not knowing what to say. If a son had come home drunk, even though he were thirty years of age, Thomas Jans would have chastised him with the sudden resolution of fierce anger. But now that his fifteen-year-old son looked up at him with these serious eyes and said, "Father, I must go," a vague feeling of uneasiness and fear came over him, a feeling that he dared not bar the way on which his son's spirit seemed to be sent forth as if by great, unknown, and secret forces, sent forth to find strength. There was a mixture of humour and bitterness in his keen, deep-set eyes as he murmured, "So — to sea — and then, the lightship . . . and so a labourer, and the best room empty, always empty."

"No, father," said he, "no, trust me for that. My eyes are open, I shall find something."

Little Mala Jans sat silent by the table, her eyes full of tears. She only thought he was going away from her, and to sea —

Four weeks later the two boys were sitting on their chests, looking first to the right and then to the left down the Hamburg quay, fairly deserted at this time of day, and then across to the ship, lying at anchor. They were waiting for the boat to come and take them across. Pete, feeling casually in his pocket, came upon a piece of paper. Pulling it out he saw written in a little crooked writing that he knew, "Keep God before your eyes and in your heart all your life. Guard always against sin and against anything contrary to God's commandment. Your loving mother, Hella Boje." Sticking the paper quickly back into his pocket he looked down the quay again as if nothing had happened, wondering, as his father had done sixteen years ago, how his tall clever mother could possibly write so badly. Kai had seen, and when Pete looked away he began to feel secretly in his pocket, and there he found a piece of paper right enough. He pulled it out and glanced quickly over it. He recognized it at once as one of those grand poems that Heine Wulk was so fond of reprinting. The title was "The Pious Mother's Farewell to her Son on Confirmation Day." Flushing red he stuck it back in his pocket without another thought.

Pete craned his neck and said, "I say, who's that coming along? Isn't it your friend the Dusenschön boy?"

"Very likely," said Kai, "he has been four weeks in Hamburg."

It was Tjark Dusenschön, certainly. He came along tall and straight-limbed, a graceful figure now that he had abandoned the stiff walk copied from the mayor, his blue tie blowing about.

"I knew you were going on board to-day. It's a pity for you to be going, Kai, you ought to have gone into an office like me. I have a very good position with a barrister."

Pete paid no sort of attention to him. His eyes were fixed on the ship watching the people go on board, and a man slide down into the boat.

"Where are you going now?" said Kai.

"I am on my way to meet a friend who is going to introduce me to his club — only for officials and their wives. I don't care anything at all for women, but that's just the sort of person to whom they are most useful. Always polite, pleasant, cool, you see, that's what I am! And then my name is magnificent, Tjark Dusenschön, and my royal blood —"

"You don't talk about that, do you?" said Kai.

"No, not I. I leave that to others." Seeing the boat approaching he stepped back.

"Well, boys," said the sailor, "there you are. If you haven't got sense you have got luck, she's a right good ship. Is the long thing coming too?"

"No," said Dusenschön, taking a step further back.

"A good voyage to you!" and waving his hat gracefully he stalked away.

When the boxes were on the thwarts Pete caught hold of the oars with both hands and pushed the boat off.

"Holloa," said the sailor, "so that's the sort you are, are you?"

Kai Jans, lost in thought, was gazing into the water.

"Push the box to one side," said the sailor — "a philosopher, eh?" he said to Pete.

Pete gave a short, scornful laugh. "Yes, he is looking for a kingdom!"

CHAPTER VIII.

IN the little house under the chestnuts by the park the two Boje girls grew up apace, very tall, very slender, with masses of thick, fair hair, so tall indeed that strangers who happened to pass by when one of the children came out of the house would say in surprise, "What big people live in that little house!" Anna Boje passed her seventeenth year and entered on her eighteenth. She carried her magnificently proportioned figure, crowned as if by a royal diadem by the waves of her fair hair, with a grace of movement that would have befitted the highest rank. Nothing in Hilligenlei was so beautiful as she. Ignorant alike of herself and of the world she dreamed the dreams of girlhood with no wishes beyond the accomplishment of her household duties — for her mother sat all day at the knitting machine — good news from Pete, and, one day, a clever, handsome husband for herself. Heinke was in her eleventh year, a long-legged, fair-haired child, with dainty clear-cut features, and eyes as grey as steel. She played with the boys of the neighbourhood, in winter in the park, under the trees or on the ice, in summer on the sands at low tide right out to the mouth of the harbour stream. Like her sister Anna at the same age, she was never without a bruise somewhere on hand, knee, or foot, the mark of a push, a knock, or a tumble; and yet, though she was in the thick of everything, shouting and running with the best of them, she was reckoned proud, like her sister, because of a kind of royal dignity in their erect bearing, their delicate pink and white faces, their calm, clear eyes. Heinke's thoughts did not travel very far. When she was alone she thought of her big brother Pete's home-coming, with a certain fear of his being rough and boorish; for the rest she was content with a day on which her pride was gratified by success at school, and her mother did not scold. No day passed without some wrangle with Hett, her youngest brother, who wanted everything his own way. His mother

loved him most of all, and always took his part, but as a matter of fact he was a liar, greedy, and weak, the rotten twig on a splendid tree.

Hella Boje's hair lost its beautiful sheen in these years. She could not get into touch with her daughters, their shyness kept them from any expression of tenderness. She knew that they would not turn to her until the years brought to them also understanding of a man's love and so of their mother. Now, therefore, all her love expended itself upon her two sons, one gone out into the wide world to help her, the other so pretty and loving in his ways, who put his arms round her with such coaxing tenderness although a big boy now. It was of them and of their future that she thought as she sat at her knitting machine all day long.

It was an evening in April: the chestnuts were beginning to be spiked with green. Anna dawdled instead of going down to Harbourmaster Lau's to borrow the big map of Eastern Asia on which her mother followed the route of Pete's ship with never wearied interest. "I don't like going now," she said, "that great Pe Ontjes is there, the map belongs to him. Lena Winkler says he gives himself the airs of an old man of fifty, though he can't be more than twenty-four. He was insufferable even as a boy." Her mother paid no attention, merely remarking, "Go, now, don't make a fuss."

It was with a very haughty expression that she took off her apron, and went out by the back door through the garden into the lane, and so in at the kitchen door to the harbourmaster's house. She hoped to find the mother there and get her to bring out the map. She was there washing up, but her only reply was to say, pleasantly enough, "Am I your train-bearer? Go and get it for yourself, he won't bite."

Mate Pe Ontjes Lau sat by the table at work on a big drawing. Looking up calmly he said in the tone which a young mate uses to a sailor,

"Well? What do you want?"

She stood as straight as a dart, anger rising within her, and told him in a high, rapid voice the reason of her coming.

He got up in his slow, comfortable way, and took down the map from the wall. "How is your brother getting on? Rather at a difficult stage just at present."

"How do you mean, Mr. Lau?"

"Well, about eighteen one does not want to be a boy any longer, and one hasn't quite become a man."

"Pete wants to be what he is, always," said she, "he hasn't got such an immense idea of himself as some people."

He did not see the hit, but was pleased at being addressed as Mr. Lau. His tone was rather more friendly as he said, "Look what I am drawing here."

She came quietly close up to the table and examined the drawing. As she did so he looked at her and was conscious of a curious feeling of pleasure in the contemplation of the strength, health, and purity of this handsome girl, a feeling such as one has when, after going far and passing thousands of houses, forgotten as soon as seen, one suddenly comes upon one, standing in a quiet green garden, full of an intimate charm that so sets it apart from all the others that even after one has passed it also one cherishes a tender remembrance.

"That's the Hilligenlei harbour stream," he said.

"What's the drawing for?"

"I have long had the idea —"

"Fifty years at least —" said she.

"What are you saying about fifty years?" said he.

"You talk as though you were fifty," said she, calmly.

This froze him again. He said coldly, "I have worked out a plan for having the channel laid straight so that the crab-fishers can get quicker to their lines and the smacks come in and out at any time; I'm going to lay it before the mayor to-night."

"Indeed." She gave another hasty glance at the map.

"When do you sail again?"

"To-morrow. I am going to Samoa as mate on the *Gude Wife*. I have been mate for the last three years."

"Indeed," she said, tossing back her head so that he could see her white throat. "Pete will be mate in two years."

The force of unconscious attraction held them, but they tried hard to hurt one another in some way.

"I should like Kai Jans and Pete on board with me well enough," said he, as if lost in thought.

"I daresay you would," said she. "They will take good care of that!"

"Why?" said he.

"Why?" said she, standing by this time in the doorway. "Why? It would hardly be pleasant for them."

"Why not?"

"Well," said she, "you played with us as children, and now — now you like me to call you Mr. Lau! Mr. Lau indeed! And who are you? Think of that time on the sandbank!"

Suddenly it flashed across his mind that he had stood naked before her. She blushed and cried out in an outburst of uncontrollable rage, "You are just the same now, just as insufferable as you were then. That's what I wanted to say to you. So there!"

She banged the door and was gone.

When she got home she said to her mother, "He is the most insufferable person in the whole world, and a fool to boot. I am not going to Aunt Lau's again as long as he is there." Then she went to prepare supper.

After supper a mad idea took possession of her; she would run down the lane into the town hall garden. The mayor always sat with his curtains drawn back so that everyone could see him at work. She would give a cautious peep in at the window.

As soon as it was dark the idea was carried out. She took up her position among the shrubs by the window. There was Pe Ontjes Lau standing by the big table, his drawing spread out in front of him. At the table sat Daniel Peters, handsome and dignified, the two aldermen beside him, struggling not to fall asleep. Pe Ontjes was saying with his usual calm assurance, "That's what must be done."

The mayor twisted his beautiful silky moustache and began affably, with a side glance at the two old men,

"My dear Mr. Lau —" Then he began a discourse on what he called a "sound system of local administration," which seemed to have every reasonable prospect of lasting indefinitely. While he was still in full train Pe Ontjes suddenly packed up Hilligenlei and the harbour stream under his arm and saying calmly, "I will reserve my scheme for the new mayor," departed with his drawing.

Anna Boje was still standing confused and annoyed by such behaviour when she heard his step draw near. He also was making his way home through the garden.

"Hullo," said he, mockingly, "Eavesdropping?"

"What is that to you? I can stand where I choose, I suppose?"

"You're a cross-grained, quarrelsome chit," said he, in a tone of serious annoyance. "Unless you change you will come to no good."

"Who are you to speak to me?" said she, "when you can't even spell channel — on your drawing it was written channal — channal! You didn't learn much at school. Do you suppose I don't know that? You only got to the top by beating everyone who knew more than you. There!"

Pale with anger he turned away. Going in the opposite direction she breathed deep with excitement, thinking. "You will never hate anyone so much in all your life as you hate him." She absolutely revelled in this new feeling until it spread so as to fill her soul, while she imagined ways of showing him her boundless contempt, and wondered whether Pete could help her to pain him. "I wish I could do him some harm. If I could only harm him somehow." Her spirit was troubled with dark confused thoughts, and her lovely eyes had a hard look in them. She gave a quick sob. Then she walked down the chestnut walk towards her house, and then turning up and down several streets till she became more calm, a great longing filled her for someone towards whom she could feel friendly. For some time she could not find anyone; then near Ringerangs inn, under the lime trees on the further side of the park, she came upon a farmer's son who had sat next to her in school at Friestadt. He recognized her, and waited till she drew near.

"I knew you from your walk," said he. "I should know you half a mile off!" He walked by her side and told her he had come back the day before yesterday from serving in the army.

It was quite exciting to have this handsome boy walking by her side, so full of friendliness. Anna talked in a way unusual for her, about her mother, and Pete; asked him about his sister and one mutual friend after another, and as they talked their eyes filled with a tender pleasure in one another that rose higher and higher.

"What dear eyes he has!"

"How dear and pure her eyes are!"

"What a delightful laugh."

"How I should like to touch her hair with my hand; it is so, so beautiful."

"Dear boy, how nicely he speaks of Pete."

"If I could only press her to me once, and hold her fast!"

When they turned into the lonely limewalk that goes across the park to the chestnut trees, his thoughts became more and more insistent and absorbing; he became silent, and she likewise, quite silent. In his young manhood he thought fearfully. "Dare I — kiss her? she is very proud. . . ."

Her heart thumped and her throat seemed to close up as she thought, "He is going to kiss me. . . ." She thrilled with the sweet joyful thought. When they came to the last piece of shade he caught hold of her, and kissed her, kissed her many times, without saying a word. She stood quite still in unspeakable confusion.

When he let her go she ran till she came to the door of her house. Then going into the kitchen she cooled her burning cheeks and brow with water; but they still glowed with excitement. In order to have an excuse for remaining in the kitchen she fetched her mother's store of silver, six dessert spoons, a dozen teaspoons, and a sugar bowl, and began to clean it.

Still dreaming herself in his arms she rubbed and polished, and in the midst of her absorption the child in her balanced each spoon between two fingers of her uplifted hand so that it stood out bright against the darkness of the kitchen wall.

"Oh, how heavenly it was . . . firm and strong he stood there and clasped me fast . . . so that I couldn't move. . . . Oh the joy . . . the wonder of it . . . my knees felt quite weak . . . I was utterly happy."

Dreaming thus, her hands and eyes playing, like children left alone, with the spoons, came upon the names written upon them, "On the occasion of their marriage . . ." it stood on each, with the name of the giver and the date after it.

"I wonder what mother looked like then. She was as young as I am, only two years older . . . young and beautiful and happy. Oh, what happiness to be always with the one one loves best in the world . . . that must be lovely, and fearful too at the same time, fearful . . . oh no, not fearful at all, altogether lovely. Then the first baby came — that was me. I wonder was mother very big then: some women look so hideous. Was she very ill? How long did they live alone

together without children? . . . Oh, yes, I can tell from the spoons." Holding a spoon up against the light she counted from the wedding day to her birthday, then counted again, her lips contracting to a narrow line and a hard expression coming in her eyes; she threw the silver noisily into the drawer and went upstairs to her room without saying good-night to her mother.

From this day her natural pride and shyness grew. At first she could not resist the temptation of going along the limewalk when she had shopping to do in the evening, to stop at the spot where he had kissed her, standing with her eyes shut to feel all the sweetness of that kiss. Soon, however, she forced herself to resist. She did not want to think of such things. They seemed to her now full of hidden dangers, like the soft grass that grows above a bog; she felt vaguely that hot blood ran in her veins, and was uneasy as is the wood in May when the morning grey brings the first birds.

She was harsh towards her mother, speaking as little as possible, and found fault continually with Heinke and Hett.

In autumn, when the big schoolboys who lived in their attic threw down a chestnut or a branch to her as she passed below she took no notice.

When she went to balls she was in great request as a dancer, especially among men who danced well. The exquisite grace with which she danced and her superb beauty made it a joy to move and be near her; but no one ever ventured to invite her to take a glass of champagne or stroll under the dark trees. And she noticed that this was so, and she grew more and more proud and scornful, and pretended that she had no inclination for such things, almost persuading herself that it was the case.

Her mother bore her eldest child's coldness in silence, remembering her own restless unhappiness at that time in her life, and feeling powerless to help. She worked all day at the knitting machine to pay off the sixty pounds of debt, taking every penny and shilling that Pete sent from his small earnings for that purpose carefully wrapped up in paper to the savings bank, to be ready for the naval school, longing for the day of his return to come at last.

Autumn came again with its beautiful days of fresh wind and clear sunshine; and the sun shone through the little window above the door into the dim little passage, and at last the

postman came, and this time with a parcel. A parcel! Afterwards they could hardly tell how they had all managed to get into the passage together; the little place was illuminated by the fair heads. Then they took the parcel into the sitting room. Heinke, always ready and never in a hurry, had the chisel ready in her hand to break the wood open; and she took out the little Chinese boxes carefully packed close together inside in a strange fibrous kind of straw. The name of the owner was on each.

"That's yours, mother." Hella Boje sat down on her chair beside the machine and touched the shiny black wood with trembling fingers.

"He bought it," she said softly, "he held it in his hand," and her eyes suddenly filled with tears.

Anna gazed in silence with an expressionless face at the delicate object in her hand, thinking with a secret softening of the heart of the brother whom she dearly loved.

Heinke had put aside her song book, and taking off her jet necklace placed it in her box, admiring its workmanship and praising her absent brother in affectionate tones. "It is too sweet of him, mother. . . . One thing, mother, Hett sha'n't have this one, anyhow."

Hett looked around, ready to complain if the others had come off better than he had; seeing no present grievance he went out to play.

Hella Boje held the letter in her hand, but could not read it because her eyes were full of tears.

"Read it out, mother."

"I can't, dear: you read it."

So Heinke read:

"MY DEAR MOTHER, — I bought this for you the day we came here, Hongkong, from Vladivostock. I wanted to give it to you myself, but now I have come to the conclusion I am not going to come back to Hilligenlei until I can go straight to the navigation school. That's another year from now. I am earning more here, you see. I don't know whether Kai Jans will go with me on to my next ship. You see we have served our time now and we're on the lookout for a first-rate sailing vessel. If he wants to come with me again I shall be quite glad, for he is really a nice fellow, but I don't depend

upon it. I expect he will stay with me because he needs to have somebody to talk to about everything, and he can't do that with the old sailors. He is an extraordinary creature.

"Dear Anna, you can keep darning needles in your box. You must have a great deal to do for the two children. What am I saying? Heinke must be a great girl by now and Hett is eleven! When I was buying your box the Chinaman, having no respect for my eighteen years, tried to cheat me. He didn't see our sail-maker standing behind me, however, and he gave him such a box on the ear that he fell down on the matting. So here it is. I have had to buy a new suit of clothes, my old coat was quite done, and I had grown out of it. I have still seventy-five shillings in my box which will come to you soon after this parcel. Fifty shillings are to go into the savings bank for the navigation school, twenty-five to go to paying off father's debts, if you are well and can spare the money. Dear Anna, be a good daughter and don't let mother sit all day at the knitting machine. If I keep my strength I can pay off father's debts in five years. She is not to sit doubled up for that! Dear mother, you are not to worry over the stockings, I can darn my own just as well as Anna does them. I can tell you there's not a button missing on any of my shirts or drawers. Always smart, that's the first thing: then second, attention! and third, never contented — always learning and getting further on. Trust me, my eyes are always open. There was a young American on board our old ship, he only wanted to see the world, he said, that was all, and then become whatever he chose. His father is a clergyman. I learnt a great deal from him. Never say die — that's my motto; one must always be ready and bright, and I am that, you can be sure. Kai is no good at it, he's always so shy, like neighbour Martin's two-year-old — do you remember it, Anna? Once we ran after it for half a day. You wanted to ride on him, but we could not catch him.

"Dear mother, I have decided always to go on a sailing vessel. Lots of people think they are going out of fashion, but the captain said to the mate, 'You'll see, mate, big sailing vessels will always be the cheapest for heavy freights and long distance journeys.' A little while ago a lovely American sailing vessel passed us, magnificent, I can tell you. It hadn't any more canvas than we had, but it beat us for all that. The

mate swore and the captain pretended not to see. I examined it to see how it was. In Vancouver and San Francisco I spent the whole day at the docks; I enjoyed myself, I can tell you. A dock like that is my Hilligenlei, my Holyland.

"Kai Jans, I do believe, went to sea to find it. Every time we go on shore he cranes his neck and goes among the people and through the streets with his eyes open ever so wide, not saying a word. We were in Vancouver for twenty days, and pretty free. He got hold of an extraordinary old sailor who went on shore there and they went off for three days right through the town and up into the mountains. Afterwards, when we were being towed out of the harbour he forgot his work and everything in gazing over to the mountains; and suddenly he said to me, 'Do you know, there is a magnificent country there, beyond the mountains, wide and broad and clean as if it was holy. I shall go and settle there one day, I think.' The end of the story, of course, was a talking to from the mate. All the time we have been away from Hilligenlei he hasn't got to know anyone except me and the queer old man. He's always by himself or listening with wide-open ears. They all like him because he's a good fellow, always ready to help; and when the steward was so ill he burst into tears.

"Dear mum, when I come home you'll be astonished to see how big and brown I have got. You can't imagine what my hands are like. Goodbye. Keep well, and think often of your loving son and brother,

"PETE BOJE."

Each of them read the letter at least three times to herself, and they talked it all over, with occasional intervals of silent thought. Then Hett came in and went to bed. Then Anna and Heinke went too—Anna, cold as usual, without saying good-night; Heinke quiet and gentle.

Hella Boje sat for an hour at the machine. The dull, monotonous tick-tack of the lever went on in the low, little room. Then she went into the bedroom. She went up to her children's beds and bent over their faces—first Hett, her youngest; in the dim light of the lamp she could see the strongly marked, obstinate lines of his handsome face; then Heinke; and for a long time she stood, lost in thought, as she gazed at the

clear, calm face with its open features and strong, beautiful mouth.

Going across to the room where Anna slept, she saw as she looked down upon her that the time was not far off when she would be a woman — a strong, passionate woman, like herself.

She went back to the other room, and, sitting on the edge of her own bed, thought of the conversation she had more than once had with her husband. "Unless our children are fortunate enough to come early into good hands, they are almost sure to suffer much." Folding her hands, she began to pray fervently for her children.

As the ardour of her prayer abated, her thoughts, now more at rest, came to her hero, her brave one in the far, far distance, wondering how he looked and whether he were now voyaging on a new ship. So she fell asleep and dreamt — dreamt that she saw his ship, a tall and graceful vessel with two masts placed in front at a curious angle. And it was cast from side to side by a heavy swell, purposelessly, as if by the hands of wanton children. She seemed to see the deck desolate and ruined, and thought, "That is no *Hilligenlei*." She stood anxiously on the bank gazing at the ship, and saw it distinctly — how distinctly! Yes, there it was, driven on, tossed and turned by the swell that rose in waves as big as houses.

CHAPTER IX.

THE schooner *Clara* from Hamburg drove before a light breeze and heavy swell on the southern China sea. She had suffered severely in the eight days' storm, having lost half her rail and the whole of the forecastle, to say nothing of the main-sail.

They had chosen very ill. Fourteen days ago, when they were hanging about the quay at Hongkong, the *Clara* lay in harbour, long and narrow, with her masts bent very far forward. Pete, who devoured every vessel with his eyes, stared across at the schooner till its boat came to land, and then he asked its name and destination of the awkward, emaciated-looking man who sat in it, looking at them with anxious eyes.

"Havre, with tea and matting. We want two hands. I am the mate."

They asked one question after another, Pete casting longing eyes the while at the grey schooner. Then they stepped back and consulted together. They would rather have gone to America, 'Frisco, or Vancouver on one of the huge wooden, four-masted schooners, new and strongly built, and the best pay in the world. But, after all, where they went did not matter much, and the schooner was splendidly built, certainly.

They took their leave of the good old ship with everything in order, but their consciences were strangely perturbed, and they shrank away as if doing something that they would not like to be seen.

They had now been eight days at sea, and knew that they had done a very stupid thing.

The captain was drunk all day long; the mate was a fool, who should have been a tailor instead of a sailor. The cook, an elderly man, generally more than half-drunk, had been on the *Clara* for years, and in the course of time got the captain completely under his thumb. The crew — twelve hands in all — had been picked up eight days ago in Hongkong and Macao

from the ends of the earth. There was a Hamburger, who had destroyed himself, body and soul, with brandy; a tall, pale Frenchman, two Austrians, a Dutchman, three Italians, two Belgians, a short, pleasant little Dane, and a dirty labourer from Gateshead, who was lame. They were all young and inexperienced, all more or less possessed by the brandy fiend. Not one of them was over two-and-twenty.

And the vessel? What is the use of graceful outline if every week you have to spend an hour at the stiff, creaky pump, and canvas, ropes, and metal-work is all rusty and mouldy?

And now the storm had washed away the whole forecastle, with galley, bunks, chests, sacks—everything in it. They stood, now, on the greasy decks, the ship rolling heavily from side to side, most of them half-drunk, all of them wet to the skin, hungry, and cold. Some were clearing away the ropes that hung about the scupper holes; others were mending the wretched old sails; others patching the railing, cursing the while, and discussing the damage that had been done.

Pete Boje sat half-buried in a sail with an angry, forbidding expression on his face, Kai Jans beside him, splicing a topsail yard. His features looked drawn and pinched—showed the signs of exhaustion and want of sleep. They shrank from meeting each other's eyes, in shame of their own stupidity.

Then the others began to mock at Pete Boje. "Come now, Hilligenleier, what are you working so hard for? Why do you always hang about the captain and the mate when they are on deck? And why, when it isn't your watch, do you lie on deck in the cold instead of going to sleep?"

Pulling himself together, Pete laughed pleasantly and said, "It's because I'm afraid for all your lives that I'm always on the watch, day and night."

Thereupon they said, "Not if we know it! We don't trust you the least, not in the least!"

"He's false!" said several voices.

"Only yesterday," said the Austrian, "I had just had a glass, and was busy splicing—not fast enough for him. He wrenched the rope out of my hand and glared at me like a wild beast, I can tell you that."

Then up spake Kai Jans, the silent, and laying his thin hand on his breast, "I will lay my life on his honesty. I have known him since he was a child."

They were silent with astonishment.

After a time Kai Jans came up to Pete. "I say," he said in a low, thick voice, "if you have any game on, play it for all it's worth, so that they may not suspect anything." Suddenly, as he said this, the thought crossed his mind of why he had left Hilligenlei and gone out into the wide world. Hot tears rose to his eyes. "This hideous hole will make an end of us!" he groaned.

"Head up," said Pete; "don't be afraid. As sure as God is in Heaven and I keep strong, in spite of all this filth, we shall see Hilligenlei again. Come, lying and deceiving and eyes always open — that's what does it."

A time of misery followed. They slept, stowed away, with fourteen men in the wretched, dark hole forward. When the captain was off duty he sat in his cabin, drinking and sleeping and tinkering at dainty little models of sailing ships, of which he had constructed at least fifty, all different and all correct in every detail. Each of them had in its hold a paper with particulars of speed, weight, and numbers. He played with them endlessly, drinking the while.

"I will tell you about the old 'un," said the Hamburger. "You must know that when he was young he had a lovely shipbuilding yard on the Reiherstieg at Hamburg. When he took to drinking, however, he let his business go to rack and ruin. He was bankrupt, and went to sea."

In his watch he used to sit, huddled up, without moving, on the skylight, one of the models on his knee, staring first at the dainty little object in his hand, and then out to sea.

The mate was oppressed and uneasy among the men. Now that he had to share their quarters he lost the last of his assurance — hardly dared to say anything to them. They took no notice of him at all.

The cook stirred the dirty semi-raw food in a big iron pot held together at the top by pieces of twine. The beans were hard, the salt fish smelt bad, and the biscuits began to be alive. However, they took what came, since the cook had the brandy under lock and key. Drinkers do not mind dirt.

Eight days more, and the tall, pale Frenchman became ill. His legs swelled. He hobbled along the leeward side, catching hold of the railing as he gazed out to sea, full of homesickness.

His parents were respectable people, but an early taste for gin had ruined health and character.

Soon one of the Belgians sickened. He got as yellow as a quince, as he lay with burning eyes in the dark corner of the captain's room on a bit of old sailcloth, his hands folded on his breast, eating nothing except, now and then, a bit of mouldy biscuit, which the Frenchman dipped in brandy and forced between his unwilling teeth.

The others kept well, but were always either drunk or lazy. Pete Boje worked like two men, and watched like three. He got as thin as an underfed hound, but his iron strength was unbroken. Poor Kai Jans, always slight and fragile, seemed to shrink; his chest sank and his back got bent as if there were a heavy sack of corn on his young shoulders; he walked wearily, and his eyes had a dry, unhealthy glint.

In this miserable plight they drove south to the burning southern islands, and the smell aft became unendurable. Kai Jans, Pete, the Dane, the mate, and the Frenchman—the whole fore-castle watch—got matting out of the hold and made a sort of hut on deck. There they lay, and at night looked up to the calm splendour of the tropical sky, the tops of the masts grazing the stars.

They saw that the captain often went to sleep on his skylight, the ship's model held carefully in his hand—a most curious picture in the starlight—and went down below from time to time to refill his wretched little lamp; and they saw the bottle going round amidships, and, therefore, they resolved that one of them must always be on the watch. But Kai Jans' eyes would not keep open.

Thus they slowly approached the Malay Archipelago. The wind was very squally, and kept hauling forward. On the fourth night they all fell asleep, exhausted by work and wretchedness. Suddenly a loud banging noise awakened Pete. Rousing himself by a violent effort of will, he sprang up, and, running aft with a loud cry, seized hold of the helm. A black squall was driving hard against the sails. The man sat, dead-drunk, at the wheel. Pushing him aside with his foot, Pete exerted all his strength to port the helm. The others came up and leaped to the braces, calling to the watch. The watch was huddled together in a drunken sleep. They had to pull down the topgallant sail alone. The ship recovered itself.

The mate was desperate: he smote his forehead with his hand.

"What am I to do? What am I to do?"

"Overboard with the brandy," said Pete; "now, this very moment. There's the cook lying there — he's got the key."

"That's no good," said the mate, shaking his head despondently. "I did that once, but the captain quite lost his head, and the cook spat in the pot." Sitting down on the companion, his hands folded between his knees, he became lost in thought, and said: "If I get home this time I shall give it up and buy a public-house at the wharf."

"Yes," said Pete, bitterly, "if we ever see a wharf again."

"I know the owner," said the little mate, opening his eyes wider and wider. "He has large feet, and a face like an ox. The *Clara* is on the condemned list; it will have to go. That's why it has such a captain and mate."

Suddenly, eighteen-year-old Pete Boje was close by his side, and said to him with blazing eyes: "Mate, let us speak frankly, as one man to another." He struck himself on the breast. "Will you manage to get the captain to give me the starboard watch?"

"He won't do it, Hilligenleier — never! What would the cook and the Belgian say?"

"I am twenty-two. I was two months at Emden, until the money came to an end."

"No good, Hilligenleier — not a bit of it."

"Thy father has a dockyard in Hilligenlei: I grew up among the shavings. I used to tear my stockings on the splinters. Tell the old 'un that. . . . You know it's true, Kai Jans."

"Yes, it is so," said Kai, in a loud voice. "I can take my oath on it, mate." The mate got up and walked away. Pete Boje's face contracted until it was positively ugly.

"I will flatter him up all I know, but the day I leave this ship I'll spit in his ugly face."

"Be quiet," said Kai, anguish in his face, yellow with fever.

Soon afterwards the captain himself appeared and called for Pete Boje. He looked straight at him with his true honest eyes, and told him everything he wanted to know. Whereupon, calling his watch together, he said to them: "From now on, do ye hear, Pete Boje has my watch."

Immense excitement. Pete swore furiously that he would not take it.

Kai Jans said in a tone of contempt: "Navigation school, indeed! You can do without that!"

Even the kindly little Dane, who had stood by them staunchly, remarked that he liked Pete; but this was out of order, and order must be preserved. They all lied right and left: a magnificent display of Saxon cunning. Gradually the others calmed down and said, "Let him stand there on the poop and hold the helm and watch himself; we'll have our supper."

So this evening Pete took the first watch, leaning over the compass and gazing with restless keenness at the sails. Kai Jans, transferred to the larboard watch along with him, stood with aching limbs and heavy head by the helm, his arms twitching from hard work at the pumps.

The rest of the watch got more drunk than ever. About midnight, one of the Italians, a very young good-natured fellow, who had taken to drink for want of food and a kind of false pride, came aft with a full bottle in his hand, which he offered to Pete, staggering and saying something in his own language. Suddenly overcome, Pete seized hold of him and pressed him to his breast, looking at him with distraught eyes, saying: "*Je veux voir ma mère, coquin!*" then let him go. He went forward cursing. "Kai Jans, *mon cher*, using your hands and legs is not enough; you must use your head too, as I do. Do you know a Hilligenlei boy told me once that you could tell stories. Now then, open your mouth, and talk to them so that they forget this swilling."

"Pete, I can't — I'm too shy."

"The wind is getting up, and they won't watch; there is four foot of water in the hold, and they won't pump."

"Pete, I can't. I can do it all right in my head, but tell it to them — I can't."

"Kai — you must. We want to get to Hilligenlei, don't we? Only get us to Capetown, and then we'll run away. Kai, once we're at Capetown we'll run . . ."

So Kai went down the companion, dragging one foot after the other, and said cheerfully: "Now, boys — we must pump a bit."

"Pump! . . . Come and drink with us, man."

"Very well. . . . but now come to the pumps!"

They began to pump, but soon got tired of it. "That's enough." "Lord, what hard work."

"Yes," said Kai, "my grandfather was better off than I am."

"What has your grandfather got to do with us?"

"What's my grandfather? He had a queer experience, I can tell you."

"Tell us about him," said the little Dane; "tell us about your grandfather."

"Go on — we'll pump a bit the while."

"Well . . . about my grandfather. For a great many years he was a thresher with a man called Ohle Griesack; and this man . . . every evening he used to fill his huge boots with corn, and so bring home about four pounds of corn every evening. That was the sort of creature he was."

"Go on — we'll pump a bit more."

"The mad thing was that he had not a bad conscience about it. If he had the parson wouldn't have said anything to him. But when Ohle Griesack came home and shook out his boots, he used to laugh. Of course, that would not do for the parson, and he went to him. He sat himself down with his full weight in the armchair, and rattled off some twenty or thirty texts. But Ohle Griesack remained unmoved. All that did not matter to him, he said: he might do anything that his conscience approved of. He felt he had a right to take the corn, and was never happier or more peaceful than when he sat down in his armchair of an evening, took off his boots, and shook out the corn. What the parson said was so much Greek to him. He got quite jovial, poured the parson out a glass of brandy, and wished him as good a conscience as his own. Well — so the same evening the parson went to talk to God about it."

"Let's pump a bit, now."

"Well — first of all, God thought of going Himself. Then he sent one of His lieutenants. Towards evening, when Ohle Griesack was slowly making his way home across the fields, feeling pleased with himself and with his heavy boots on . . . who should he see sitting on Ahrens' hedge? The angel Gabriel. His heavy white wings hung down to the ground, and when he got down one wing stuck on a nail, so that he had to unfasten it with his white hands. Then he went with Ohle

Griesack and talked to him. But he stood firm. With the best intentions he could not do it; if he were to look into every hole and corner of his inner nature, with a lantern — like the poor woman in the Gospel — he could not find a single dark or dirty spot for the devil to turn in. He invited the angel in, took off his boots, and shook out the corn in his jovial way; then going in stockinged feet, he fetched the brandy flask, and, apologizing for having only one glass in the house, he drank with the angel and was glad that he approved of the flavour. The angel went to God, and told Him how it was . . . all as it should be! So — ”

“To it, again, boys!”

“Well . . . then said God. ‘There is no help for it. I must put on my boots and go and speak to Ohle Griesack myself.’ He got up, not meaning to have a whole day’s work with the business, but to polish it off before breakfast, and so he went on the morning of our Lord — in aller Herrgottsfrüh — and was already sitting on a sack of wheat when Ohle Griesack and my grandfather came in to the threshing floor. Ohle Griesack was rather frightened when he saw the Lord God sitting there on the sack of wheat, without any state, but with immemorial eyes: eyes that were not made yesterday. He spoke to Ohle Griesack in friendly fashion; but to no purpose; none at all. Ohle was a stout little person, with high round shoulders. He drew up his shoulders a shade higher, so that he really looked as if he had three heads, and said: If God would only be so good as to give him a bad conscience, he would be very much obliged: he could not manage it for himself, though he had taken a great deal of trouble over it.

“God went away without more ado; but, of course, he did not care about being seen up on high, and so he spent the whole day hanging about the harbours in London and Hamburg. Evening came, however, and he had to go home. You can imagine they made faces there behind his back, glad that the Chief had failed for once. So they sat down to supper and enjoyed it very much. Then God, who always sits at the head of the table, lifted up his grey head, and commanded Death, who always stands at the door, to go and bring Ohle Griesack that night to the end of his journey, and then go to the old surgeon Rühmann in Hilligenlei, and tell him to be ready to take

off Ohle's cap in the morning. He wanted to know what was wrong with the man, he did."

"To it again, boys; pump away!"

"Well . . . so it happened. My grandfather watched by the side of the man till he died. Very early, next morning, when my grandfather had just lit Ohle's short pipe, which he had taken in compensation for his watching, in came first old Rühmann and then God, with two of His angels. Old Rühmann cut away, and the angels bent over Ohle. God sat comfortably in Ohle's armchair, looking round the room, well pleased to see it so clean. Then old Rühmann shook his head and said he could not find anything.

"'No, nor we either,' said the two angels. 'He is just like everybody else.'

"Then God gave a deep sigh and said 'What a lot of trouble about a Holstein working man!' Then he got up, and taking the brain in the hollow of his hand, he examined it with his clear, shining eyes. Then, after looking at it for a short time, he said: 'Yes, look here. Do you see this little twist . . . there . . . and here, again — it turns aside just the least bit. Do you remember that time when we examined the great poet's brain? The twist was just the same, only it went the opposite way: one a thief, the other a poet! What an endless trouble and fuss these men do make. They trouble and fuss and judge — they're always judging. It's simply incredible how they always know best, and always find fault with everything. And yet, only two days ago, the Saviour made my meaning clear enough to them: "'Judge not, but see that your land is holy"' . . . Do not forget,' he said, 'that Ohle dines with us this evening; his clean room pleased me.'"

Kai Jan told stories all the time they sailed past Borneo towards the Sunda Strait. He sat on a spar, and, taking his hands from his knees, which had become as sharp and hard as flints, he spread out his fingers as if holding a golden ball in them to prevent it from rolling away. His big nose had got sharp and pinched, and under his thoughtful forehead his eyes shone like a fire beneath a dark grate. The sailors said to one another in astonishment: "What has happened to him? He was the quietest of us all, and now he tells such stories."

He began to rejoice in his weird gift, and in a voice hollow with hunger and exhaustion, he told them all sorts of stories,

mostly of the sea. The cook and the mate were laying evil plans, and the crew was in subjection to them. The captain was very ill. But then, lo! the storm clouds came . . . crossing the mead of heaven . . . like great black swine, getting bigger and bigger, and darker, and covering sky and sea . . . and then — suddenly — there came down angels from heaven and stood there in crowds. And from the stern God's clear voice rang out — a hard, hard judgment. There was nothing on earth or in heaven that did not present itself in glowing pictures to his sick, over-strained mind. The pale, sickly Frenchman lifted up his thin arms and said: "*O Hilligenleier, tu es truly un bon Catholique; car les Saints* — the holy — run among the people." The cook only stared at the brandy-bottle in his hand. Pete stood at the poop gazing at the compass and the sails. The captain, by his side, stared gloomily across the sea.

"I, Pete Boje, from Hilligenlei, am to drown — and why? To give that rich blackguard with the big feet his money? No, thank you. Although my eyes are burnt out of my head by thirst and fever and weariness, I am going to see Hilligenlei again. Hush . . . mother raises her head . . . she has stopped working the machine . . . hush . . . children . . . what a quick step that is . . . Anna, Heinke . . . do you hear? Our door. Yes; oh, oh, Pete! — Pete, my dear boy!

"Captain, you have never had a mate who had to ask so many questions!"

"Ask away; you're a man with the desire and the power to learn — that's what matters."

"Show me another model, captain."

"I'll bring up a couple."

"The sails, captain?"

"They are right."

"Thank you, captain."

"Look here: this model. . . ."

They got safely to the Indian Ocean, and through the monsoon, and held their course. Their existence was wretched enough. The bacon was putrid, the biscuit and the meal alive, the water bad, their only shirt a torn one. The tongue clave to the roof of the mouth, their eyes were burning. They jumped and sang, always on the watch, lying through thick and thin.

"Laugh, Kai . . . don't look so sour . . . tell the black-

guards a story . . . what's the matter, man? Have you been drinking — you? For shame!"

"Pete, I *can't* drink the water." He looked at him with piteous eyes. "I sha'n't get drunk, you needn't be afraid — never. You needn't look at me like that. I say, the Dutchman is furious because you snatched the bucket away from him. He is quite drunk, and raging against you. Speak pleasantly to him, somehow."

"I will go afterwards and embrace him! Go and tell them a story."

Kai Jans told them a story. His tales grew unnatural and violent. His fevered imagination drove his fantasies rushing like wild beasts into their muddled brains. He told them about the women's ship. "A crew of twenty women: just think: all young, and all mad with love: the captain the most beautiful of all. When their desires grew uncontrollable, that is, about once a month, they used to make up to some ship in the night, on the open sea. Ships side by side . . . they jumped on deck . . . just imagine, boys, if that were to happen to us!" They all discussed it till they roared with excitement, and so to the pumps; and he shouted to them in time to the groaning of the pump, so that the wild pictures stood living before their eyes. For him, indeed, they were mere stupid, empty words; he was still pure.

It was fortunate that they escaped storms, and that the nights were clear and starlit, for the mate could not have held out.

"Captain, here is a comfortable chair. My father always used to say we ought to build the sort of clipper they make in Glasgow — steel, with sharp bows and rounded prow: he said we were far behind them. America and England, he used to say."

"I built three of that sort," said the captain. "I was the first in Germany to do it. I'll show you the model." He got up stiffly, and went down the companion with unsteady step, returning with the model carefully under his arm. Never by any chance did his trembling hands break one, delicately constructed though they were.

"My father sent me to Glasgow, and across the sea. We two, he said, were to teach Germany to build sailing vessels. As an apprentice, I began in the rivet yard, and then rose to

drawing. I was quick and ambitious, and a hard worker. Afterwards, I built ships myself, seventeen of them. Then I didn't care about it. I went to sea, and now I am on the *Clara*." He looked round for something.

"The bottle is beneath your chair, captain."

"My brother, the youngest, had a sandalwood cradle; but when I gave up the yard he lost spirit too, and now he is a fireman on an English steamer. Many Germans stoke English fires. Such heat, and dirt, and darkness — poor, ruined Germans."

"Drink, captain, to get rid of such memories."

"The bottle is a curse, mate, but I can't do without it. We Germans would have gone far if it were not for this accursed drinking." He took a big draught, and, becoming lively again, explained the model. When his voice became drowsy Pete pushed the bottle towards him and he drank.

At last they came to Capetown. The two sick men had to be put ashore. Pete and the young Italian rowed them. The captain came, too, to buy more drink. Pete remained to watch the boat. He went up to two or three sailors who were walking about the quay, but they did not tell him what he wanted; so he went on, looking about him. Then a very young sailor came along in wide canvas trousers and shirt, a fresh-faced fair-haired little fellow, with a quick step and lively eyes. They recognized countrymen in one another.

"I'm on a three-master from Hamburg — the *Gude Wife* there. Cargo from Hamburg here. To-morrow we're going to the South Sea, and we want two hands."

"Indeed," said Pete, giving a longing look at the ship lying proudly in the roadstead.

"What's your name?"

"I'm Hans Jessen, from Brunsbüttel."

"You don't mean it! Not the chemist's son? I am Pete Boje from Hilligenlei; and there's another fellow from there — Kai Jans. Is your ship a good one?"

"Splendid! We all came from Blankenese and Glückstadt and that part."

The Hilligenleier stared in front of him.

"I expect," said Hans Jessen, "that when the mate hears you came from Hilligenlei he will manage to have you taken on."

"Look," said Pete, pointing to the *Clara*. "There we are. Tell your mate two fellows from Hilligenlei are simply perishing there. He can fetch us away this evening about ten if he will."

Hans promised and went off.

The captain came staggering along, his eyes like glass; behind him a case of bottles. They rowed back to the ship. Pete took the case from the Italian, and carried it into the captain's room.

"Good stuff, captain?"

With his hoarse, embarrassed laugh the captain struck the bottle with a trembling hand against the edge of the desk so as to smash the neck, and filling up the glass offered it to him.

"No harm in that," said Pete, handing back the glass and looking at him with speaking eyes. "Drink, drink! Have a cosy evening, captain. We are lying here very snugly, and I'll answer for everything."

The larboard watch went below; the starboard sat forward drinking. He went up and down the poop. Kai Jans, who wanted to keep near him, sat down on the companion and went to sleep. He had not said a word to him.

After an hour, it being now dark, he went down into the captain's room and found him asleep. Providing himself with the keys he took his papers and Kai's, and taking twenty of the best models he put them in a sack in the corner. Then he went forward with five bottles of the rum, and, laughing shyly, with his hand to his ear, he said, "Sh-sh . . . here are five bottles for you of the very, very best . . . sh . . . So that the old 'un doesn't notice."

They drank in silence and were soon asleep. Kai Jans slept also.

Soon afterwards he heard the muffled sound of oars and a cautious call. Pushing over the sack, he went to Kai Jans and touched him on the shoulder. He stood up without a word as if he had been expecting the summons, and followed with half-closed eyes; following the teacher's clear-eyed son, as he did in all practical matters.

Half an hour later they clambered on board the *Gude Wife*.

"Look," said Hans Jessen, in his cheery voice, "here is the mate."

The two Hilligenlei boys looked up and saw a tall man

approach, pushing aside a boy who was in his way. They recognized him in the starlight.

"Good Heavens," said Kai, in a low voice, "Pe Ontjes Lau!"

He looked at them with a calm, distant manner, and thinking, "What starved, ragged objects!" asked them coldly for their papers.

They felt in their pockets and showed them to him.

"You are in my watch."

When they were going below Kai saw for the first time that Pete was carrying a sack, and heard a jingling noise inside it.

"What have you got there?" he asked, suppressed anguish in his tone. He knew already. He sat down on the ladder, and, resting his head in his hands, said in despairing accents, "We have deserted the Dane, who was always so faithful . . . and now, we are thieves . . . and . . . oh, how he looked at me . . . Ugh! How dirty I am."

He covered his eyes with his hands.

"You'll always be a fool," said Pete, "and no use at all." He entered the cabin with a distorted face.

CHAPTER X.

THE Gude Wife.

Let there be no mistake; the three-masted full-rigged *Gude Wife*, built on the model of Jan Marbst's pinnace.

Who has seen her? Not in harbour, her naked rigging standing stiff and dry as a withered pine-tree, the temporary stay collars grinding and whirring, the men working noisily in the hold. No, not then. But when she charges, chased by the south-easterly gale, through the raging seas, sixty-three degrees south, off Cape Horn, and takes one grey wave after another as she lies on one side with storm sail set, sheets and railing glistening with ice! Or when she holds her graceful course over the endless expanse of dazzling sunlit water in the southern seas, all her light grey sail spread like five-and-twenty light grey wings, the pride and glory of her distant native town? Or when she labours, buffeted by the north-western gale of a dreary November morning, through the grey waste of waters to the opening of the Elbe, or past the Texel breakers, dashing white and terrible on either side, on, brave and grand, however the weather bends her.

Can anything be said against the *Gude Wife*? Is there a single piece of mouldy rope on board her to annoy the sailor to-day, and throw him down dead upon the deck to-morrow? Is there a single piece of superfluous ornamentation which gives him useless trouble?

Think of the captain!

The captain is Jan Deeken of Blankenese. True, his fine body is set on a pair of short bow-legs. And nobody can deny the fact that he goes up and down, up and down the deck with short steps, head sunk on his breast, till he suddenly looks up to cast a rapid glance on deck, and out to sea, and then, dropping his head again, spits softly. True it is, too, that he is not precisely soft-hearted. But what of all that? Was he not just? did he not provide at the right time for Christmas? and

did he not give the cook a splendid store of provisions? and — what is most important of all — did he understand his profession or no?

There was something almost uncanny about it. It seemed impossible not to think that there was some connection between his short-legged body and the elements. The whole sky was clear blue, not a cloud anywhere on the horizon, and a steady breeze blowing. Suddenly Captain Deeken stands still; he stops spitting. All the sailors stop their work to stand and look at him. He lifts his head and snuffs the air. Then, turning, goes straight down into his cabin and comes back wearing, instead of his blue cloth cap, an old woollen cap of English make, with a tassel on top, pulled down to his ears.

"So," say they all, "he's mistaken this time," so they all say. "He's mistaken — the old 'un! The Lord be praised!"

But he was never mistaken. Half an hour later the first order was given.

Could anything be said against Jan Deeken? Not possibly. The laziest sailor — if a lazy sailor were conceivable on board the *Gude Wife* — had nothing but praise for him.

Then think of the mate!

He was proud — no doubt about that. No one had ever heard him make a joke: it was only seldom that he was even friendly. It was not till much later that he used to joke, secretly and not often, with Anna Boje and her children. But he never bullied or swore at his men — always calm, always polite. And he knew his business.

Have you seen mate Lau? On Sunday mornings as he went about the deck in fine weather, in the carpet slippers that his mother had embroidered for him, with beautiful coloured beads? Or that time when the boy fell off the beak into the canal; when he was on the railing in an instant, throwing out the life-belt, while the word of command rang out clear: "The lee boat out!" Or when he took a hand with the rest; that time when they were worn out by six days of storm south of Cape Horn, and five men could not bring down the halliard, the wind was so fierce: then he suddenly took hold and they found themselves all five sitting on deck! Or did you see him turn the old seaman off the poop? The man had been pilot on a Norwegian barque in his young days, with his certificate from Trondhjem, and all the rest of it, until the brandy fiend

robbed him of his certificate, and turned him off the poop back to the forecastle. Ordinarily a quiet simple fellow, once on land he would drink until his heart grew sick within him, and then he would climb up on the poop, his heart full of the good old days. But when he looked up, there was mate Lau, who looked at him and said a few words, quite quietly; and he went grumbling forward again. Or if you had seen him as he sat in his white linen suit, with a bottle of soda water in front of him, outside the little tavern at Apia! Up there came a troop of pretty brown girls, their bodies naked, save for a wreath of flowers round the waist, and smiled at him. He looked at them for a moment, and for a moment his eyes were full of fire, that is true; only a moment, and then it was gone—absolutely gone. He looked at them calm and unmoved. Certain it is that anyone who knew mate Lau of the *Gude Wife* knew a strong and upright man.

Then the cook!

The cook was sublime. Klaus Gudewill was capable, clean, smart; and no captain's cook, either! He was glad to set a good meal before the aft cabin, but for the fo'c'sle it was a labour of love. When it was possible, as it always was, he stole for the fo'c'sle. And it was something worth while to be the cook's mate! Last and not least he possessed the quality of a true ship's cook: he told stories well, and could sing. His birthday came when they were in the Apia roadstead. The captain had to stand him grog for the occasion, and then, indeed, what yarns, what songs! They lay on the deck and on the spars listening to him. Last of all came the "Cook's Song," a long one, with a verse for every day of the week. He sang right to the end, and was so inspired that he thought of singing the captain a serenade; but he declined, spitting as usual.

Then the crew!

The crew? An unnecessary question, that. A good ship and a good captain can always get good men if they want them. Jan Deeken wanted them, and got them.

Captain Deeken did not trouble about the starved scarecrows that had come on board in the Capetown roadstead. The mate was responsible for them. And he did not trouble about them either. Far from it. He looked away as if he had never seen them, as if he had never shown them how to

bite off an eel's head. He did not know them. Pete Boje said, "He is puffed up with pride." From time to time Kai Jans would try to catch his eye, fixing an imploring gaze upon him; but without success. On the fifth day of their being on board he found two beautiful clean shirts on top of the little trunk that had been assigned to him. They were huge, and the name had been cut out. Again he tried to meet his eye, again in vain. So he went silently about his work, with quivering lips.

The crew regarded them coldly. They had almost all been six to ten years on the *Gude Wife*, and formed a kind of set which had no need whatever of two ragged starvelings — they must look out for themselves, and see to their behaviour. No one can become a member of a family in a day. Even the boys and the three inferior sailors stood, with the others, aloof from them.

Our two heroes of the *Clara* found themselves very small and very unimportant all at once. They worked zealously, were modest and friendly when off duty, lied hard about the company they had left, marvelling at what seemed to them such a number of wise and upright men, and awaited the progress of events. So things went on for thirty-five days, till the great storm by Cape Horn gave them their position among the others.

In spite of a heavy, wet north-wester they had held on successfully to 63°, and had come far enough west to pursue a northerly course. Suddenly the wind veered round to the south-west and raged for three days with icy squalls. Towards evening on the third day, when the deck began to be frozen over, the captain produced his woollen cap with the big tassel. Darkness came on, and the steady icy wind blew hard. About nine o'clock, when it was pitch dark, the stir of wind and water grew. The air was filled with an ominous rushing that roared and whistled in the masts and rigging, whistling shrill and high. Pete Boje happened to be at the wheel, the captain stumping, unwearied, up and down, up and down. Then mate Lau took the wheel and said, "Fetch the relieving tackle."

Pete ran and soon came up the ladder, the tackle in his hand. At that moment a heavy sea came up suddenly from aft, threw the *Gude Wife* forward, and knocked the old cap-

tain's wretched legs from under him, so that he seemed in danger of a bad fall. Lau let the wheel go and seized the captain. In the twinkling of an eye Pete was in his place, seized the wildly whirling wheel, brought it to a standstill, drove it back. The pilot handed over the groaning captain to the cook's care, and crying to Pete, "Well handled!" gave the helm to the boatswain, signed to Pete to go forward, and, going up the companion, ordered both watches on deck and all three upper topsails made fast.

The men stumbled out of their cabin in their heavy oilskins and brailed up successfully. The storm shrieked wildly round the ship. The *Gude Wife* rolled heavily. Huge seas dashed over her, filling the main deck with foaming water. Lightning darted fearfully across the dark sky.

The larboard watch, ten men strong, went up to the fore topsail; the starboard, eleven men strong, to the main topsail. It was pitch-dark — so dark that one could not see one's own hand, and a sharp hail cut against their faces. Nevertheless, they got aloft, and, buffeted by the wind, caught hold of the stiff new canvas with fingers bent and frozen with the cold. Kai Jans was at the arm, next him the man from Dantzig, and then clever little Heine Marquard. Everything went well, although the *Gude Wife* swerved at least thirty-five degrees from side to side, and they could see nothing but the lightness of the sails. All went well. The sail was on the yard. Kai bent down to hand on the gasket to the Dantzig man. Trying to catch hold, the Dantzig man, a tall fellow, bent over the yard. Just at that moment the *Gude Wife* gave a sudden lurch forward. A frightful cry rent the dark air.

Kai Jans saw nothing, but feeling a burning pain run through the hand holding the line, gives a loud, wild groan; looking to one side into the darkness, sees nothing but emptiness there, lays his hand again upon the sail to feel once more the awful pain, lets the line go, and climbs down after the others in the hideous darkness and the shrieking, roaring noise, whimpering in speechless pain.

The starboard watch was there already — a dark spot forward. Then up came the mate, crying aloud:

"What was that cry up there?"

They shook their heads. One said, "Somebody gave a shriek."

"Twice they shrieked."

Then said the Norwegian, Torril Torrilsen, in his calm voice, "I think that's one of them — one of the larboard watch, mate."

Pe Ontjes Lau stretched out his head towards the larboard watch, which was climbing out of the sheets, and cried aloud, "Kai Jans, my boy."

"He isn't here yet," said Pete.

Once again he cried aloud, "Kai Jans, my boy, art there?"

At last he came, last of all, stumbling, sobbing, on to the deck. Seeing before him in the darkness the great Pe Ontjes Lau, he ran to him with uncertain steps, and, holding up his bloody hand, cried out, "O Pe Ontjes, dear Pe Ontjes, my hand is all torn to pieces. I'm a cripple," and he held out his hand as much as to say, "There it is for you." "The Dantzig man flew from the yard, and tore it with the line."

Pe Ontjes Lau had taken hold of him by the shoulder. "Be quiet, my boy," he said. "Pete, take him aft to my cabin."

The others, having scattered over the deck, now came back.

"He is nowhere on deck."

"Boys," said the mate, "You must see that we can't possibly put about. We're going ten miles an hour in front of this storm."

Then Torril Torrilsen, the Norwegian, lifted up his two hands and prayed aloud, "Our Father —" praying quickly, to bring rest to the struggling soul.

It was about midnight.

In the morning, about five o'clock, as they lay with both lower topsails reversed, the wind got up more and more. By six the main deck was covered with a wild, white sea, foaming and roaring, and mountains of water, white as snow against the darkness, flew over the fore deck. All hands stood on the poop. About seven, when the morning grey began to appear, wind and water came with such force against the ship that she was hove on her beam ends, and could not right herself. They stood waiting — twenty above and the two wounded below.

"It's coming."

"No, it's not coming."

Then out cried the mate, "Topsail sheets up! Who volunteers?"

Torril Torrilsen and the carpenter tried to hold Pete back by the arms.

Dierk Peters cried out, "Let me. There is no one dependent on me."

"He is too young."

The mate tried to say, "I will go myself."

But Pete Boje from the Friestadt dyke was already down the companion, up the railing. Over came a great sea, but he ducked, just right, with his arms fast round the post; and then, how he sprang up! like a fox that has lurked a long time behind the wall when he sees the hare coming out of the wheatfield in the morning grey. Now he is by the forecastle. Now he has let go of the railing. Now—he fell heavily against the cabin, leaned against it, and disappeared.

The next moment the huge light-grey sail flew out; whew! how it rises.

Slowly the *Gude Wife* recovered.

"Where is Pete Boje?"

"He won't come back."

"The chain hit him."

"He's too young."

The mate looked quickly at Torril Torrilsen. "You are in command on the *Gude Wife*," and ran down the companion. It was wonderful to see the roaring water clothe the big man as he went. Then Pete Boje appeared up aloft, jumping on to the rail. Half way they met, and turned back to the others.

Seven days the storm lasted. Seven days they toiled without taking off their clothes, mourning for the man from Dantzig. No one uttered a jest.

The eighth day was bright and sunny. A fresh south-east wind blew them over the sea to the beautiful distant islands. They packed his chest, tied it up, and set it in the storeroom. Then, putting aside all thoughts of tempest, death, and weariness, they were cheerful once more. Kai Jans and Pete were now received as true comrades, but Kai was still an invalid. The captain had put back the torn portions of his thumb and first finger in their right place, smeared the whole with ointment, and made an elegant bandage. More he couldn't do.

Kai went up and down the deck pale with pain and grief at being a cripple and unable to do anything. He did as much as he could with his left hand.

By the third day Pe Ontjes could bear the sight no longer, and said to Pete, "What are we to do with him?"

"Have you nothing he could read, sir? That might give him something else to think about."

"When we are alone," said Pe Ontjes, "you might drop the sir."

"Just as you like," said Pete, proudly.

"What sort of books does he like? Nautical ones?"

"No; that isn't his line."

"Not his line. He's no sailor, then?"

"No, of course not."

"Oh, ho!" said Pe Ontjes; "that alters the case."

"He is fondest of the sort of books you read at school," said Pete. "As a boy he read the French grammar through and through. He's a curious being. He doesn't see anything that's going on about him. He sees wonders, that's my opinion."

Pe Ontjes looked across the sunlit water, lost in thought, and said, as if to himself, "Yes; that is what he is like, and it's an utter mistake for him to have become a sailor."

"Yes, of course," said Pete. "There are lots of people who ought to have kingdoms, but where are they to get them from?"

The mate walked aft, thinking deeply. As he did so his eyes happened to fall on Heine Marquard, squatting on the deck with his cap at the very back of his head, leaning against the railing and scraping off the rust, whistling softly the while.

"Tell me. You did Latin at school, didn't you? I've seen all sorts of books about in your place. It was Latin, wasn't it?"

Heine Marquard stopped whistling in his astonishment. "Yes," he said, quite taken aback. "I brought the stuff with me, and sometimes when I am alone in the cabin I amuse myself by knocking the books from one corner into the other. One must revenge oneself somehow, sir."

"Well," said Lau, "you would be doing Jans a very good turn if you would give him those books and help him a bit

with them, don't you know — just show the main road. I expect he can find out the side paths for himself."

That afternoon Heine Marquard, son of the Berlin Councillor, fetched his Latin grammar and his Cæsar, and after spitting exactly like Captain Deeken, and making a number of weird gestures expressive of horror and disgust, squatted once more upon the deck, and began to point out the "main roads," finding a pleasure in them for the first time in his life. Kai Jans sat by his side with an eager, anxious face, holding up his hand for it had begun to suppurate, and throbbed painfully.

They all took to him. When they saw him secretly loosening the bandage and looking at his wound they all came up, inspected it, and told stories of remarkable cases of healing. "You needn't be afraid," they would say; "it will get all right. You'll be able to pull down a tree with it. Only wait and see!"

When he sat in his corner reading and looked up they made some joke, and Jan Petersen pretended to defend him against all the others, saying, "You stick to your learning; that's the thing for you;" and to the others, "I will tell you something. When I was at school there was a boy who learned and learned till his head swam. He was always at his books. He learned himself into a fever at last, and his mother had to put him to bed."

"What happened to him?"

"What happened to him? They put his books into his little coffin with him. He asked them to do that, you see. When a man's got learning in him there's nothing to be done. I can tell you, it's as bad as drink."

They did not care so much about Pete Boje. Though he had jumped down the ladder so bravely at Cape Horn and was mighty friendly, they did not care for him. They felt that there was something behind his friendliness, and that he wanted to rise above them. Mate Lau saw little of him, though he spoke to him from time to time.

"The *Clara* was a bad ship," said he.

"I learnt a great deal there all the same," said Pete.

"I know the captain and the mate," said Pe Ontjes, contemptuously.

"That explains it," said Pete. "They were not much like the almighty here and his representative!"

"Oh, indeed!" said Pe Ontjes, going away.

He came back next day when he was off duty. As usual, Pete was sitting rather apart from the others, reading a book on naval architecture which Heine Marquard had been given by his father. Lau had his short pipe in the corner of his mouth, and seemed to be in a good humour. He only smoked when in exceptionally high spirits.

"I say, how is your eldest sister?"

"I think she is quite well," said Pete.

"How old is she now? about eighteen, isn't she?"

"Yes."

"What does she write to you about?"

"Oh, different things."

"I suppose she goes now and then to see my parents?"

"She never says anything about it."

"Has she ever said anything about me in any of her letters?"

"She said once, 'I hope you will never have the bad luck to get on the same ship as the big Lau boy!'"

Pe Ontjes gave a short laugh. "How long ago was that?"

"Oh, about a year ago."

"So long?" he said, in a tone of relief. "She has changed her mind since then, I think."

"I don't imagine so," replied Pete.

"What does a brother know of his sister?" remarked Pe Ontjes, turning on his heel. As he went he said, "You can fetch the year's numbers of the *English Shipbuilders' Journal*, if you like. There are lots of models there. You know English?"

"Of course," said Pete, indifferently.

"You want to rise, of course. Nose in air—I see."

"That is in the family."

"Yes, indeed," said Pe Ontjes; "it is that!"

They had a glorious voyage. Everyone who took part in it remembers it—most vividly of all those who afterwards went ashore to follow a profession. They were all so united. There were no sets among them—no cliques; they were like children in a real family. Didn't they, like the village children, change their games according to the seasons? They play

Puss in the Corner in winter, after the swine-killing; tops and tig at Easter; dancing in summer; and in autumn they run about the open fields flying their kites; and in the same way a proper ship's crew that goes far out over the wide, desolate sea, has special games for special times.

When they had rounded Cape Horn there was a great cutting out of caps. "A plate, cook — a big one and a little one." Then two circles, cut round the plates, the difference to make the edge, and there's your baker's cap. They could easily have put all the work on to one person. Good Torril Torriksen and William Baldermann, who was rather weak in his head, would gladly have made the few caps and finished them off ready: but no! like properly-brought-up children, they all took their part in every game.

Later, when they got into the southern monsoon they fished and caught birds — every man, no! every child of them. A bit of bacon at the end of the line, and they all gazed over the stern into the water drawn by the keel. Hans Jessen held the line. Then Hinnerk Lornsen, looking up, "Boys! here are albatrosses. Quick, where's the sling?"

Hinnerk Lornsen plucked them and stuffed the feathers into a canvas pouch which he brought home with him. His children, seven of them, sleep in the little red house behind the Elbe dyke on the feathers that their father plucked in the South Sea.

Eight weeks later they had rounded Cape Horn again, after a few rough days, and were slowly taking their homeward way towards Teneriffe with the south-east monsoon, not touching a sail for three whole weeks. Then there was a great carving of ships. The fore deck was entirely covered with shavings. The best of all were made by old Dierk Peters, who was close on fifty. As a young man he had become acquainted with a pretty Holstein girl, whom he met in a street in Hamburg. She yielded readily enough to the fiery young sailor. He treated her honourably and married her. In the first year of their marriage he spent twelve days with her altogether. The first time he came home she was quite beside herself with joy. The second time he found a strange cigar-case on the window-sill. The third time his child lay in the cemetery, and she could not even tell him the number of its grave. The fourth time he found her lying unconscious

on her bed: when she awoke and saw him she went out of the room and did not return. He went back to sea, and became quieter and quieter. He had become possessed with the idea that he was a double murderer of his wife, inasmuch as he had brought her to Hamburg from her native village, and of his child, inasmuch as he was the cause of his miserable existence, and, therefore, of his death. He came of a stock that bears burdens on its own shoulders instead of casting everything on Providence or Fate: and the shoulders have grown broad and strong in the process.

He carved the best ship, working at it for six weeks until they reached the heights of Teneriffe, and presented it to the mate. When Anna Bojes's little children lay on their backs in their cradles and let their eyes wander, they saw either their mother's lovely face or the ship hanging from the beam which had been carved out on the Atlantic by Dierk Peters, who called himself a double murderer.

Pete carved too. He was clever enough to take his part in all the games which the *Gude Wife's* children played; but he soon withdrew, and sat buried in the *Shipbuilding Manual* lent him from the aft cabin, or in the study of his models.

They were in the south-east monsoon for five weeks. From Slate Island to the Equator not a wind climbed into the rigging to change the sails. Then came a slight squall, the wind veered round to the north-east, and for weeks more, until they reached Western Island, there was no work on the sails.

Such Saturday afternoons as they had!

Everyone knows what Saturday afternoons on a first-class Hamburg sailing-ship are like; but there were never such delightful ones on any ship as on board the *Gude Wife* on this voyage. They all sat on deck to the leeward side — one patching, another washing, a third darning, a fourth reading, a fifth whistling, and a sixth talking to anyone who would listen.

William Baldermann sat with his back to the water-cask mending the lining of his mess-jacket. He really deserved a new one, but he wanted to save. He had not been very successful in doing it so far, but now he was really going to save. As a matter of fact, it had hardly been worth while before. What is five pounds, or even ten? You can't begin to save so little as that. Three days ashore, and it has all slipped

through your fingers — gone for ever. This time, however, it was worth while. In Apia he had mercifully been ill, and stayed on board, and now he had twenty-five pounds in the old 'un's box. Twenty-five pounds! That would be something like, going home with that. First to Glückstadt, to the old people, and throw fifteen pounds on the table. "For your old age." Then to Altona, to the navigation school. High time for that, he was twenty-eight. That was why he was darning away at his coat, and smiling happily to himself.

He did not carry out this plan. As soon as he got to Cuxhaven he fell into the land shark's hands. They passed off two watches upon him — one for each waistcoat pocket — the very newest thing; and the next day there he was in a box in the music-hall at St. Pauli with a bedizened female on either side. On the ninth day he slunk away from Hamburg on board an English vessel.

Heine Marquard had brought his workbox on deck, and, after soaping it over, was now standing upon it with legs wide apart, working away with his broom, thinking, as he laughed to himself, "Mother ought to see me now, and my lieutenant brother;" and with that his home went out of his head, and he began to wave his broom in time to an air he was whistling.

Jacob Simsen and Otto Fink sat back to back. Jacob was carving a panel with a Latin inscription to the effect that one must wander far and wide, to distant countries, over the wide sea, although one might meet death on the way. Otto was darning. They were the same age — about twenty — that is, in the fulness of their youthful prime; but their faces were very unlike. Jacob had grown up in the kindly atmosphere of a parsonage, among brothers and sisters now scattered throughout Holstein in parsonages of their own; he was a constant reader of the Bible and his great friend was Torril Torrilsen, although the good old man was thirty years his senior. The carving was for his mother, and as he worked at it he thought of those roguish brothers of his and the little sister, who will marry, one day, and have children, with a gentle, kindly expression on his face.

Otto Fink scowled at the world. He was the son of a rich farmer in Ditmarsh. One morning, when he was seventeen, he and the farm boy were ploughing over a wet ditch

with four horses when suddenly the off-horse slipped and pulled the one behind down with him. The boy and all four horses lay in the ditch.

His father, standing at the door with his hands in his pockets, saw it all, and came up just as the boy and two horses had been safely extricated. Although he saw how steep and slippery the place was, he flew out against the boy in uncontrolled rage. "You're a good-for-nothing. . . . Get out of my sight, and never let me set eyes on you again. It's the best thing you can do. Tell me when you want to go and how much money you want with you. I don't care about anything so long as you go." And with these words he turned and went.

The boy put everything to rights and ploughed till mid-day. Then he went to his father, his face hard and set, and said, "Give me the money."

His father, his face as hard as his son's, threw a fifty pound note on the table without a word. The boy went to his sister's room and got her to make him a purse of white linen, on a stout cord. He put the money in it and hung it round his neck, next to his bare chest. Then he left the house and went to his aunt, who lived an hour's ride away, and stayed eight days with her. Every evening for eight days his eyes rested at curfew on his father's big, beautiful farm, and every evening at the same time his father stood in front of the farm and looked across to him. They saw each other standing thus, and each knew how the other's heart yearned; but pride would not yield — the pride of seventeen no more than that of fifty. And no one else could reach those hard hearts — mother, sister, clergyman, or friends. They knew that every word only hardened them the more. On the eighth day he went to Hamburg and joined the *Gude Wife*. And now he sat back to back with Jacob Simsen — the one carving at his cheerless Latin with happy thoughts of his dear home, the other living again, with darkened face, the dark episode of his departure.

Two years later Jacob died of malaria, on board ship, near the Gold Coast. Torril Torrilson prayed with him, and spoke the Lord's Prayer over him, slowly, as he lay on the rail. Every day his father and his mother look up at the carving. It came home safely, and hangs now over the sofa.

Soon afterwards Otto Fink left the *Gude Wife* at a South

American port. Nothing was heard of him. He never wrote. Twenty-five years later, a year after the death of his father, he suddenly appeared in his native place, a cold, handsome man, the image of his father, unmarried, captain on a large steamer sailing between San Francisco and Yokohama. He visited the aunt who had befriended him and made some short excursions in the neighbourhood, drinking a glass of wine with a few old acquaintances, but communicating little of his present life. To his younger brother he spoke like a stranger. His sister was dead. He remained eight days without going to his father's farm or visiting his father's grave. In his stern face and rigid bearing anger still seemed to smoulder, and no one touched his heart. And all from one angry word—"Never let me see your face again!"

Pete Boje stitched a loose button on to his best suit. He was not really fussy, but everything in his kit was clean and tidy.

Kai Jans sat in a heap, his wounded, bandaged hand resting on his head—it did not burn and throb so much when he held it up—reading Cæsar and consulting the grammar alternately. Hinnerk Lornsen, sitting by his side, was telling the sailmaker his favourite story of how the pilot's fair-haired daughter, fourteen years old, had sailed about with him in his canoe on the river at Aberdovey in Wales, and taught him to speak English and to kiss. That was a long time ago. Now he was forty, and father of five children. In the middle sat Hans Jessen, flat on the deck, with a volume of the *Boy's Own* on his knees that the kind neighbour at home had given him—kind to him, although she had eight children of her own. Idly turning over the leaves, he cried out, "Look here, here's the crew of the expedition to the North Pole!" Two or three were at his shoulder on the instant. Heine Marquard, who, having sat sulky and dumb on the bench at school, was now glad of any opportunity of showing off his learning, leant over him, and good old Torril Torrilsen, who was sitting by his side mending Kai Jans' jacket with grey wool of the thickness of your little finger, leant over too, and, putting his rough-worn brown forefinger under the picture, said, "Look; there's my name." They all looked at the picture and recognized him. Even Kai Jans lifted up his eyes to look, and then gazed, dreaming, across the sea into the dim darkness.

Afterwards, as evening came on, they sang old songs. Whoever shared these Saturday evenings on the *Gude Wife* has never forgotten them.

It was a lovely, clear September evening, a hundred and fifty days after the *Gude Wife* and her children had raised anchor in the harbour of Apia. They all stood on deck, looking out, waiting. The sun went down, twilight came on, still no fire. So they went below, for the air was chill. They had hardly got down — William Baldermann, always the last, was actually still in the doorway — when out sang the cheerful voice of Jacob Simsen, the look-out, "Light ahoy!"

They all rushed on deck, on top of the forecastle, and stared across the twilit sea. There in the distance was the Lizard light, glaring down from the cliffs over the grey waste of waters with its wild-beast eyes.

"Think, only think, man. What shall we do when we first get to Hamburg?"

"What will mother say? Think of that!"

"Pete, do you know I haven't been home for two years."

"I haven't been home for four!" said Pete. Looking round with sparkling eyes, he found no Kai Jans among the others. He went down below and found him crouching in the darkest corner on Torriksen's locker with his bandaged hand resting on his knee. He stopped at the door and said rather hesitatingly, "Be glad!"

"What for?" said Kai in an expressionless voice.

Pete went up again.

The next day the English coast slowly came in sight. In two days more they had come through the Channel. On the evening of the fourth day they passed the first Elbe lightship. By the fifth they were being hauled in, and there was no getting them away from the forecastle. Mate Lau might harangue them sapiently, but it was no use.

Hans Jessen kept coming up to Pete. "Look! look! there's Neufeldt. Look! look there! I say, man, isn't it first-rate?"

Pete listened, seeing in his mind's eye the Hilligenlei tower and the low room where his mother —

Up came mate Lau. "What are your plans?" he said. "I mean, for the rest of your life — always a sailor?"

Pete shrugged his shoulders. "If it was like the old days, when the ship was your own, or a bit of it!"

"Yes, if!" replied Pe Ontjes. "If! Now it's a confoundedly poor affair. You're only an official, and on the water at that. It's all right while one's young. But afterwards —"

"Yes!" said Pete, deep in thought; and, looking into the future, he seemed to see his life's course dimly stretching out before him, as one sees the harbour stream through the morning mists. "Since I went to sea I've been more interested in the ship itself than in sailing. It's the construction and the way it goes under the sails that interests me so tremendously. And the old man on the *Glara*, he made me feel it all a great deal more. I don't know, but if a man devotes himself, heart and soul, to a thing from his youth up, and at the end really knows it, he must be fit for something; he must be really worth something; and the grander, the more important the thing is in itself. . . . Yes, yes; that's what I think. I don't know any more."

The mate nodded slowly several times. "Yes; there is a good deal in that," he nodded again, and waved his hand in the air, "nose in air, eyes wide open, there is a great deal in that. Dock inspector, or something like that? Upwards, always upwards!"

"And you?" said Pete, politely.

"I? Well, I will tell you something, only don't talk about it to the others. I shall stick to the *Gude Wife* for three or four years, and then I shall see if I can't fix myself up on shore."

"In Hamburg?"

"No; in Hilligenlei."

"In Hilligenlei?" said Pete in astonishment.

"Yes; my dad has a plan which he is beginning to put into execution — a corn exchange on a small scale, to deal in maize and barley with the Hamburg smacks. There's nothing to be done in Hilligenlei; it's dead alive; but the neighbourhood is good, the country folk — Anyhow, I'm not going to Hilligenlei this time. But go to my dad, will you, and give him my love, and regards to your mother and sister."

"I thought," said Pete, "you were coming to see what became of Kai Jans."

"I have thought a great deal about it, I can tell you, but

nothing has come of it except writing a very long letter to old Wedderkop. Do you know him? He is the one creature in the place with a soul above the commonplace. Go and see the old boy, and tell him what a fine fellow Kai is. You know him as well as I do. No good as a sailor, quite apart from his useless hand. If he doesn't know of anything else he might get him into some business in Hamburg."

As the sun was sinking next day they were just about to sit down to supper in the little, low house. The mother was still at the machine, but Heinke and Hett were playing impatiently with the cups. Then a quick step came along — a quick, uneven step — that stopped under their window.

Their breath stood still. Oh! how happy they were! how happy they were! How his mother stroked him! Heinke and Hett began to cry aloud when they saw it. They had never seen a big man stroked before.

Then what a wondering.

"How tall you've got."

"Not tall, mother; broad!"

"I say, Anna, what a huge girl you've grown."

"I'm as tall as you are," said she.

"And I'm nearly as tall," said Heinke, "though I'm only twelve!"

"I seem to be the littlest, then," he laughed.

"But who is the stupidest?"

"Oh!" said she; "we shall see in time. We haven't fallen on our heads yet!"

He looked round and rejoiced — all tall, all fair-haired, all with proud, grey eyes. Then what questions! He put fifteen pounds on the table. "Mother has paid off ten pounds," said Heinke. "The work's far too hard."

He sat down by the machine to see how it was made, and scolded his mother, who stood by him, her laughing eyes full of tears.

"How did Lau treat you?"

He praised him. "A bit proud! but we're that, too; but a fine sailor, and just. He sent regards to you — you too, Anna."

She threw back her fair head without saying anything.

Heinke stood, a question trembling on her red young lips.

"Do you know, I have read all the letters that Kai Jans sent home, and I've always sent my love to him, and he his to me."

"Yes, I know. His hand isn't better yet."

"Oh! not yet? May I go now, mother?"

She flew down the harbour street, up the side of the dyke, and went in. There sat the tall, brown youth with his bandaged hand, at the table, his father and mother with him. All three faces were oppressed and sad. They were as far again from each other as they had been four years ago. She stood in awkward embarrassment at the door, looking at him and thinking, "How thin and ugly he is." She had only seen him once, four years ago, when he went away with Pete, and had thought him handsome.

"Look," said Mala Jans, lifting up her head. "There is Heinke Boje. She thinks a great deal of you."

She stepped up to the table, holding away her arm. "I am glad to see you," she said, in a friendly tone. "Does your hand hurt?"

He shook his head. "No, not now." Then, reaching to the window-sill, "Look, I have brought you a little basket from Samoa." Knowing that the Bojes had to be treated respectfully, he added, "I bought it on purpose for you."

"That was very nice of you," she said, slowly and distinctly, looking happily down at the basket. "What are you going to do now?"

"Oh! if I knew!" said he, despondently, looking nervously at his silent parents.

"I did not tell you," said his mother, "that Kassen Wedderkop had read all your letters. He said Pe Ontjes had written to him. Perhaps he may know of something for you."

The door opened, and Kassen Wedderkop came in. Decidedly, he was too tall and too broad for the low room with its two tiny windows. His groaning and his voice were much too loud for so small a space and three such shy auditors.

"Oh, ho; there he is," said he. "Well, how's the hand?" Taking hold of his arm, he led him into the declining light to look at him. The refined, intelligent eyes, the wide, proudly-cut mouth, pleased him as much now as they had done four years ago in Heine Wulk's office. "How's the Latin grammar getting on? and Cæsar? The people in Korea were all deaf, that's

why I speak so loud. Well, to go to the point at once, if you like you can go to your books. The old manager is dead, and there are two or three young teachers who are glad of anything out of the way." He gave a deep groan, feeling his back. "One thing only I ask of you. Later, when you are a man, you are to be inspired by my great idea — that is, that the peoples round about the North Sea, they are of one race, of one faith — they all have the lion as their coat of arms. They are to join together, offensive and defensive alliance — and even if it is fifty years before it happens, and wars come between, you are to *believe* in it!"

"That I will," said Kai, his emaciated face glowing with joy and goodness. "All peoples should be one."

When their first joy was abated Thomas Jans remarked, with that expression of shy shrewdness, touched with roguishness, which often came into his eyes, especially when talking with so-called educated folk, "Yes!" he said, "yes! He has seen so much — America, Africa, China. He has been right round the world. But he hasn't found Hilligeniei, the Holyland, yet!"

Kassen Wedderkop laughed with some embarrassment.

"No? Where is it to be found?"

"Where, indeed?" said Thomas. "I believe" — his eyes were full of roguery — "I believe it doesn't exist yet; it is somewhere in the future!"

He was thinking of the Utopia of the Labour Party. That seemed the Holyland to him. And he thought, "Now he will be a learned man, and he will help us to reach it;" but he did not dare to say so before his son, or before the educated man.

His little mother leant against him, saying softly, with beaming eyes, "Kai, shall you go to school in your mess-jacket?"

But he heard nothing that they said. He stood in wonder and astonishment at the entrance to a new life. He saw himself wandering along it — wandering, wandering — thinking at every turning in the road, at every rising in the ground, "The Holyland is coming — here it is."

CHAPTER XI.

A YEAR after his return Kai Jans, able-bodied seaman, now twenty years of age, went to the grammar school with a blue cap on — no trifle that. Think of Torril Torriksen, who never took up a book or paper of any kind except the old hymn book with the Bible picture in front. Think of Heine Marquard, who said that if he were king he would see that everybody, instead of going to the grammar school, went to sea, fore or aft cabin, according to his worth. And now he sat among people who would spend half an hour over a Latin sentence, among teachers, one of whom said that Horace was the wisest man that ever lived in the world, while another regarded the binomial theorem as the key to all wisdom. Most assuredly, he had got into a different world. Instead of the fresh breeze blowing over the wide, boundless sea, he had a funny little low room, with heaps of books and very small windows.

The greatest hardship was the old one. The trouble he had had as a child, had never lost while at sea, was with him still, more acute than ever, among these sharp, learned people. The expression of his deepest thoughts, thoughts that seemed to him natural and even obvious, used to rouse wonder and ridicule in others. Had he known that what he said was astonishing he would have kept silent, but he only discovered it to be so from the scorn and astonishment in their faces.

There was a school ball, to which he went, for he was fond of dancing in the genial sailor's way. He liked dancing with Anna Boje best. She was just his age; both were twenty. He talked to her about Pete, now at the navigation school, and they got on well together in a straight-forward, friendly way. If he did say anything extraordinary he knew that Anna would not repeat it. The Bojes stood by him, and never allowed anyone they cared for to be laughed at.

Afterwards, however, he danced with the daughter of one of the masters. He jestingly compared Ringerang's hall, where

they were, to the Hamburg harbour, making those stout old beer-drinkers into the quay with the dredgers; the seven portly elderly dames into the four-masted full-rigged vessels in the sailing-dock; and the doctor's two malicious little daughters into the tugs. She held her fan in front of her smiling face. "Now," said he, "let's cut across the harbour. Take care. We almost grazed that coalship — great black thing she is. Look! there's Anna Boje sailing past, the proud *Gude Wife*. Now we cast anchor."

The pretty creature soon spread the report of what Kai had said, and there was no end of talk. His schoolfellows teased him remorselessly. "You have hardly a word to say for yourself generally! and now all at once a whole history!"

The dredgers and the full-rigged vessels declared he was only a workman's son, and would be a common sailor all his life. The director took him aside and advised him to be more careful.

The whole thing was painful to him. He resolved firmly only to open his lips when it was absolutely necessary.

It was very well to resolve to be careful. People of his simple, trusting disposition forget their fine resolutions; a time comes when the over-full heart pours out, in the exquisite confusion of immaturity, all the glory of those secret dreams which wait shyly for their blossoming time.

Jacob Sill was in the highest form, and excelled all his comrades in mind as in body. Later, as a student, unbridled license drove him in the bloom of youth into a desperate grave. Now his eager spirit, thirsting for beauty everywhere, saw it throned in the dark depths of Kai Jans' eyes. He sought him out and won his confidence. On the three paths on the foot-path up the hill, and along the tow path on top, from which you can see far over land and sea, Kai Jans let fly his beautiful wild doves. Aha! how beautifully they flew! how they tumbled over one another in the air when Truth, that tiresome jay, swooped down upon them.

"Don't you think so? Do you believe what he said about the French Revolution? Wasn't it just and right? When a lazy, incompetent government allows the people to be so crushed by the deadweight of a ruling class that it can neither stir nor breathe, one day the people will shake off that weight, in sheer need of air. Good government provides for

interest and advance in every class — for hope and movement everywhere. To do so is the highest political wisdom. . . . Anyhow, one must not accept what the teachers say — every preposition, wherever found, even if it be in the Bible, even if it be spoken by the Saviour, must be examined with the open eyes, with which Adam regarded the new aspects of nature opening before his gaze. The other day he threw down a statement — there would always be war, he said, always. How can anyone say 'always'? What do we know about always? Moltke said that; he took it over from him without examining it. We get it from him, to hand it on in our turn without examination. What does it matter to me what Moltke thought? What is his opinion worth to me, or the opinion on this or any subject of the Emperor, the Pope, or the newspapers? Anybody who simply listens to other people has lost his blue ribbon and gone down into the second class. Life is too serious a business, too full of danger and responsibility, to be carried on by running after other people.

"Were you there the other day when I had forgotten my Testament and Fritz Petersen lent me his? He gave it me, saying, in a mock serious tone, 'This is my blood, poured out for you.' I looked at him. He has a beautiful, serious sort of face, and I was astonished at such a jest on his lips. If you pass a nice girl you don't take her and push her into the gutter. You respect a brave man when you meet one. But do you know why it is? The reason is, the church doesn't represent the Saviour humanly. They have made a golden image of Him with dead, speechless eyes — an old, dead image, and that I throw into the gutter. Away with it. Fritz Petersen would never mock at Frederick the Great or Bismarck or a nice-minded girl — never; but he mocks at the Saviour."

The German master was a clever, conscientious teacher. He set an essay on "If I rest, I rust." A few days later the essays were given back without his saying a word about Kai Jans', although at the end he wrote "A good essay." Kai, suspecting something beneath this brief comment, asked the teacher. He replied, "If you want to know, the essay is good, but it is not your own work. The ideas can only be those of a man of fifty." Kai Jans turned pale and sat down, not knowing what to do.

Towards the end of the hour Jacob Sill stood up suddenly and said, "May I say something, sir? I am convinced that

we are all aware that Kai Jans has naturally the thoughts and the knowledge that other men only acquire in the course of long experience."

The teacher looked at him with astonishment, and after some thought said, simply, "In that case I take back what I said." But he was not convinced, and continued cold towards Kai.

Jacob Sill had promised not to reveal a word of their conversations on the tow path, but in a weak moment he talked, and taunts and scoffing looks revived. Teachers, too, scoffed. From that time he became more circumspect, only talking with his schoolfellows about things connected with the lesson, or things they saw around them. But all the time his spirit was working its way, pained and astonished, through the brambles of opinion, gazing about it with the eyes of which he had spoken to Jacob.

Oh! that it were possible for these proud, lonely spirits to find someone to help and admonish them in the awful broodings, the wild, fanatic dreams of youth. But if they found him they would not listen. In their youth they listen not — not to the Saviour, not to Goethe. They will — they must — make their way alone through the fearsome lovelinesses of that ruddy, fairy forest beyond which is the Holyland. And if Kai Jans was alone, unguided, because he would accept no guidance, in the depths of his inner life, he had good instruction in all the knowledge and wisdom of the world. Yes, indeed; yes, he learnt to know the variety of human life and the strangeness of the human heart.

Every afternoon, as soon as he got out of school, he went straight to Kassen Wedderkop and sat opposite him at the dinner table. First over the meal, and afterwards over the newspaper, Kassen talked away, groaning at intervals, in his Korean voice, about all the doings of the big world; and he talked no longer to the "greenhorn," the "stupid boy;" now it was his intelligent young friend. Nor did he now say "That's it, and everything else is nonsense," but "That happened to me while I was in a situation in Berlin," or "When I was in the office in Hongkong I got to know a man," or "From my experiences in East Africa, we Germans — but things are said to have changed since my time;" or "Every Sunday while I was in London I went to church and saw —" "Just listen, Kai, to the Chicago quotations for corn and meat!" or "They believe

in Japan — I should very much like to know the opinion of an intelligent Jap on our dogmas! Listen to this article in the *Times* on Japanese religion. It seems to me quite correct —;” “What a blessing that you know English, and have four years at sea behind you. Even if you haven’t found Hilligenlei, you donkey, it is possible to talk sense to you.”

Yes, that was something like instruction. He began to see the rush and ebb of life. He was the son of Thomas Jans, the labourer, and he lived in the long house at Hilligenlei.

In these years life got rather smoother and more easy there. The two elder sisters went to America with their husbands — the youngest married a decent artisan. The youngest boy, a simple, straightforward fellow, was apprenticed to a good, hard-working plumber.

There was a calm, even cheerful expression in Thomas Jans’ clever, weather-beaten face now that he had only his wife and himself to provide for, and his son was able to learn, and learning so that his head swam with it. He used to sit in a corner at the meetings of the Labour Party, which had grown so that they filled Reimer’s big room, and listen. Occasionally someone would make a thrust at him, but he never spoke. They were very extreme in those days. They all laughed when the word religion was mentioned. When he came home he would take down his Bible and hunt out the passages that spoke of great times to come, and he rejoiced and believed. He did not speak of these matters with his son.

They spoke together a great deal about human destiny. After supper, or after tea on Sunday afternoons, he would lean back, thinking and drumming on the window-sill with his fingers, as his habit was; then, as if moved by the sound or the action, he would begin to talk about someone whom he had met in the course of his life, speaking of his parents and grandparents, of his character, and how he had changed, the events which had influenced his life, and the issue of human life in general. Thus Kai heard many a life history, and much quiet native wisdom, as he listened with silent interest.

Mala Jans had grown smaller since the day her son went to sea, and his return as a cripple. One could hardly believe that this thin, dainty little slip of mother had such a tall son. She was very proud of her clever, brooding, mocking husband and her serious, silent son, and even almost satisfied, now, with

his face. From her girlhood she had spent Sunday afternoon in reading the stories in the newspaper about beautiful high-born lords and ladies, who always addressed each other politely, even after marriage, and whose children all had high foreheads and aristocratic eyes and noses. She had often looked secretly at her son and found his forehead too low, his nose too broad, his eyes too small. After he went to the grammar school, however, she asked no more of his face, but rejoiced secretly in its strength and the slim uprightness of his carriage. Their silver wedding-day came when he was in the upper sixth, and Thomas bought her a dress the first time since their marriage — bought it by himself in Süder Street, and paid ready money for it. This Sunday afternoon, while father and son discussed human destiny, she sat opposite to them at the table by the other window, reading about lords and ladies, in her new dress.

There were others who helped him, too. Yes, it was instruction indeed — his. Sometimes, when he came out of the little blue room where his bed and writing-table were, through the dark little kitchen into the sitting-room, he found Stiena Dusen-schön with his mother. His mother was a proud and clever little woman, who mingled sympathy with her friendly amusement at Stiena's vague inconsequence. She now complained of Rieke Thomson. There was no being on good terms with her — and this although she and Rieke used to drink seven cups of tea together every day; and as for Tjark — Tjark never came to Hilligenlei to see her, and would not let her go to Hamburg to see him; but he did write sometimes, and at Christmas he had sent her a piece of money and a beautiful black skirt, silk one way, and had written she was not to spend her whole life darning other people's stockings. He would do something for her some day. "Now he is head assistant, with five people under him. Tjark — yes, he will get on." She talked away, her knitting needles clicking the while, and her bonnet strings and the fringe on her mantle dancing to some sweet far-away melody.

Sometimes, when he was jumping over the fence to go out to the sea wall for the fresh air, Rieke Thomson would throw open her window and talk away. "Well, old Lau has bought a second smack, and he is really bringing maize and barley from Hamburg to sell to the farmers. Pe Ontjes is going to give up the sea, and then they will increase the business. It will be

a grand concern. The old man can't write, and Pe Ontjes is a stiff creature. Have you heard? Stiena says Tjark has twenty clerks under him. I don't believe a word of it. He will come to no good — I've always said so. Jeff Buhmann is the only creature who believes in him. By the bye, have you heard a sound or even a spark come out of the smithy this last month? He squats all day in the meadow, frightening the fish with his great leather apron. Tell your mother to come and see me. I'm a poor, deserted old female. Look! there's Triena Söht. Her mouth is always full of gossip. Do you see? She's got her pipe in the front of her dress. I have to stand her tobacco!"

"Indeed!" said he. "I am just going along the wall."

"It's all very well, your learning and learning," she continued. "You'll never make up the four years you wasted at sea. Your parents spoil you, Kai. You may be very glad if you get through the school. I have always said so."

Sometimes, when he came out of school in the afternoons, he went through the chestnut avenue. If he saw Anna's fair head at the window he went in and spoke to her mother, sitting at the machine, then sat down opposite Anna, playing with her reels and scissors, and talking in a sensible, manly way while he gazed at her. She answered composedly, looking at him with complete indifference in her clear eyes, then out of the window, as if expecting something pleasant to pass by.

Ever since passing her twentieth birthday she had felt a secret, uneasy astonishment that no one came and desired her love, and her uneasiness grew. He saw nothing. To him she was what she seemed — all beautiful, calm peace. Nor did he see that little Heinke, sitting at the table with her lessons, would often raise her head and fix her clear, grey, child's eyes upon him, seeking him as the carrier bird seeks its goal.

When he was in the upper sixth he founded a club called "Truth." As the oldest and most experienced, he soon became president. Naturally, they chose for discussion the most difficult subjects in the world, with which they were least fitted to cope — religion, politics, character — handling them from a lofty and enthusiastic point of view as radicals competent to pronounce judgment. Occasionally, indeed, being, after all, thoughtful, genuine young fellows, the judgments they passed disturbed their consciences. This was most of all the case with

Kai Jans, and he used to express his doubts and go into the question again with rather more reverence. Still, in this last year he certainly became a trifle arrogant. He forgot what he had seen so clearly four years ago, that Torril Torrilsen, with his big, knotted hands—Torril, who could not write, and whose only reading was the Trondhjem hymn books and the Bible—was a far wiser, a far more worthy man than any of the teachers. He forgot that altogether. His knowledge and his talents made him arrogant. His voice used to ring out at the club loud and clear as a victorious blast. "Behold, I know Hilligenlei, the Holyland. I, Kai Jans! I shall find the meaning of the world." In his eyes it shone. "Wait and see what Kai Jans will become!"

He said to his mother with an air of great wisdom, "I don't like father's going to the workmen's meetings, and, mother, what about his reading the Bible? No one can understand the Bible without a long, special training. His reading is simply absurd."

Mala Jans bit her lips in silence, deeply pained. She looked at him almost with hatred in her eyes, and said with an assurance very unusual with her, "Leave him alone, I tell you. Don't speak of that to him."

His arrogance did not last more than a year. With the spring came reflection. His sharpness gave place to a gentler and more generous temper as his dreaming eyes began to look beyond the leaving examination to the beginning of student days. Age did its share. He was now past two-and-twenty. Anyhow, a change of which he was unconscious was taking place in him.

To be a student! to be free! to live in a strange town—that was life, and life was the thing! What was the use, after all, of all this thinking—this narrow, petty round? How beautifully Anna Boje walked!

So when midsummer eve came he let the people go past him to the bonfires as he waited in the dark road for her coming. She came, arm in arm with Anna Martens, who was living at that time with the Bojes in Hilligenlei to learn fine sewing. She was a pretty girl, as tall as Anna, but dark, and more stoutly built. All day long she sewed away diligently, laughing at her work—laughing so incessantly that it affected all the other girls at the tailoress's—laughter that seemed to arise

without any cause. In the evening, however, she became serious, and would say to Anna, "I am going up to the dyke to gaze across the bay and see if I can bewitch him to come across this evening." And sometimes she succeeded, for, as he said, he was already in bed, when heigh ho! he had to get up, jump on to his horse, and gallop round the bay. He stood with her under the apple tree in front of Anna Boje's window, and Anna could hear the sound of whispering and kisses. Afterwards she became his happy wife, and bewitched him all his life long.

"Do you see?" she said; "there is Kai Jans in the shadow of the trees. He will go with you, and I will turn back." She wanted to try her witchcraft again.

So they went on alone, up the three paths. He walked by her side: or sometimes, when the path got narrow, behind her, feasting his eyes on the outline of her figure dimly visible in the gloom. They spoke very little, for what was the use of words when each was thirsting for action? Moreover, his youth and innocence made him too nervous to address her.

When they reached the summit they looked about them, far and wide. On every side they could see across the country, see the bonfires in a great semi-circle.

There to the south-west was the Friestadt fire. Time was when Anna herself had helped to light it. With burning peats for torches they had lit the fire, and then jumped round about it.

There to the north, across the marshes, was the Hemme fire, the big wooden belfry rising up big and black behind it. Every year the parson used to send a ton of fuel and help to build up the fire with his own hands.

Far away in the west, slightly southwards, there gleamed a faint blaze, built by the shepherd, who lived alone with his sheep on his island in the midst of the grey shadows, built out of dried sea-grasses and driftwood. By his side stood his bright-eyed dog. Further off, the sheep stared stupidly out of the darkness into the glowing blaze.

On midsummer eve countless fires burned all round the town of Hilligenlei. For a thousand years or more they have burned there, so that the night encircles the town like a dark belt set with three burning jewels.

One belongs to the west quarter — that burning up on the dyke. The young brigands who make it think it no crime to steal for the bonfire, and it is none. The children claim for the

fire everything that is neither nailed nor hung up, everything that neither grows out of the earth nor is fixed there. Ten years ago it was bigger than now. When Pe Ontjes Lau was ringleader, then indeed the flames rose to heaven, and the angels had to tuck up their feet! But it's still a grand sight.

The second, belonging to the north, stands where the open fields extend for seven miles as flat as a table. The children could make a splendid fire if it were not that they are at feud among themselves and quarrel like cats. They are a big, sturdy set. Only think! There are six Wittes, seven Suhres, and nine Hanses. But their bonfire suffers from their quarrelsomeness. Twice some cankered enemy of the people had kindled their fuel the night before, so that it burned away while they slept, and since then they had to set watchers to guard the fire, who gave summary chastisement to anyone who drew near, without waiting to judge or identify the person.

The third fire was up on the heights where Kai Jans and Anna Boje stood together. There on the height the grammar-school boys had made their fire, from time immemorial, among the barrows of their Pagan ancestors, with only two interruptions. Once, five hundred years ago, the Canon had forbidden it, fearing a return to Paganism. His fear was not wholly unfounded. Thode Witt, a cross-grained old greybeard from Volkmersdorf, a village just below the summit, had put a horse's skull into the fire and then stared into the blaze as if he could see a thousand years into the past. Only forty years ago it had been forbidden by the headmaster and the mayor, on the plea that it was out of date — that midsummer bonfires were out of date! May they sleep sound in their graves, those who are not out of date!

Anna Boje stood at a little distance watching the blazing fire, the little grammar-school boys jumping round it like so many imps of darkness, the dreaming faces of the elder boys lit up by the beautiful illumination. There were many graceful, youthful figures among them. Anna stood in the shadow regarding them with her clear, calm eyes, thinking, as she had thought so often in the last year, How is it possible that in all Hilligenlei not a single man cares for you? And suppose anyone did care, would you take him? She did not know of one.

"Anna," said Kai, his voice quivering, "I wanted to ask you whether you —"

"What?" She looked at him with calm curiosity.

"I want to know —" she could hear his breath come and go — "I want to know, can you care for me, a little?"

For awhile astonishment kept her silent. Then she said, calmly, "You have always been a friend to us all. I care for you in that way."

"That isn't what I mean," he said. "Do you know The-deus, in the highest form, is secretly engaged? Anna, I know I am a restless creature — restless always, and unhappy — and I don't know the right thing to do; but if you only really cared for me, oh! you are so beautiful, so pure! then you would see how faithful, how devoted, I could be."

Anna shrugged her shoulders. "The girl who is engaged to The-deus must be a very different creature from me," she said, in her calm, clear voice. "No!" She shook her fair head decidedly. "No! that is not for me. You are far too young — not the right man for me at all. And to have to wait five or eight years! No! I tell you, No! I had rather die!"

He was crushed by the consciousness of having made a grave mistake. "Oh!" he said in a low voice, biting his lips. "Is there someone else — someone older?"

Her proud face darkened. "Who will marry me? Some families do not know me because I am the daughter of a poor teacher's widow. The others think me arrogant. I do not belong to anyone, except Anna Martens from Friestadt, whom I have known since we were children. As for the young men — there are very few real men here. Look! do you call those men?"

Two teachers came past. One was a valetudinarian, the other a mollicoddle. They stood silent for some time. Then she said indifferently, "Go to your friends. I am going home."

"Oh!" he cried with passionate bitterness, "I love you. I have loved you ever since I was a child. You shall see there is something in me; I shall make something of my life; but you — you repulse me so."

"I cannot help it," she said, and, turning from him, went down the path.

For a week Kai Jans went about with folded lips and sombre eyes. People asked him whether he was ill, and Jeff came out into the street to say to him, "The best thing for toothache

is to burn it out with a sharp, red-hot nail." He meant never to enter the house under the chestnuts again.

One day, however, when he had not been there for a fortnight, Heinke, grown into a tall girl, came up and said to him in her shy, winning way, "Kai, please help me. I've got such a dreadful exercise to do."

He could not resist this confiding appeal. He went, and was glad to be in the cosy little room again with the busy click of the machine—inside, the graceful movements of the girls' pretty hands, and the light of their fair heads; outside, the big chestnuts casting a ruddy light—and so he came again; but Anna was seldom there. She used to find something to do in the kitchen or in her own room, and leave Kai alone with her mother and Heinke. He had long talks with the child about her work at school and about Pete. He lent her books and played cards with her and Hett, and he grew to be very fond of her, attracted by her shy, spontaneous devotion to him.

Passing once, he met her in the street, and, seeing that she had been crying, asked her what the matter was. She began to sob, and told him her mother had scolded her severely for taking Hett's book, although he had beforehand given her express permission to use it. It was always so. He lied, but mother believed him.

"Mother doesn't love me at all," she sobbed. "She says I do everything wrong, and am always stiff and horrid."

"How does she come to say that?"

"Well, Hett is always saying 'Dear, darling mamma' twenty times a day—that's what I ought to do, but I can't."

"How, can't?"

"I don't know. I can think it, but not say it. I am not really stiff, but I shall get so," she sobbed piteously.

He comforted her. "You will soon be grown up, and then you will go away, and afterwards marry some splendid, clever man."

"I haven't ever told anyone, only you, because you have been so good to me, and say now that I shall marry. I wish it would come soon. I can't get on at all with mother and Hett."

He was touched by her affectionate confidence. "We shall always be friends. Let us shake hands upon it."

"Ah! you are always good to me. You are the only one

who is." Her eyes sparkling with tears as she looked seriously up at him, she shook his hand, and then ran off into the house.

His offer of friendship was genuinely meant, but the tall, fair child hardly knew what she was doing. She used to go out into the fields these summer months and pick a spray here and a flower there on the paths and along the hedgerows, making them, with exquisite, natural taste, into a nosegay as she went along, wondering what to do with it, and dreaming of how she should manage to give it to Kai Jans. She sank on her knees by the wall, regarding the nosegay and picturing to herself his expression, his beautiful, true eyes: hearing the sound of his voice. She got up and went on, still lost in thought. On her way home through the meadows she became first thoughtful and then gradually sad, till finally, sitting down on the last stile, she picked out one flower after another and threw them into the water, and so went silently home.

Kai Jans talked much with her, and enjoyed their intercourse together; but his thoughts were with her elder sister. "Where is Anna?"

"Away!" said Heinke.

"Where?"

"At the tailorress's, with Anna Martens. She is learning dressmaking, you know."

"Where is Anna?"

"Away!"

"Where? This is not the time for her lessons, surely."

"She is playing hide-and-seek in the lane with the children."

What was Anna doing in the lane?

This year her life seemed yet more and more desolate. One day followed after another unmarked by any great event. Her soul was already becoming disturbed and embittered — yet Anna had her joy — a great, deep, secret joy.

This last year, every afternoon, as she worked in the kitchen, she heard a little voice pipe out like a little sparrow, "Antje Boje?"

Then she would step out, with her graceful, swinging movements, into the garden in her big cooking-apron. There they were, the two children, in the waterway, and their father behind. The mother was always too sickly to come out with them. Anna bent to talk to the children, and as she did so "knack" went her knees. Whereupon they all three laughed.

Then the elder child would say, while she held the younger in her arms, "What have you had for dinner?" "Where have you been?" "Do you like my dress?" "Just look at my stockings!" And the little one would stroke her hair and catch hold of her ear and say, "Ei! ei! what a white ear you've got! and what shining hair! Mother's hair doesn't shine. And what a red mouth!" And then, pursing up its lips, it kissed her. And Anna — proud, silent Anna — stroked the child and pressed it to her breast with words of love. Then she would get up and look up, all confusion, into the clever, kindly face of the man, and exchange a few words with him. At last, saying "I must go back to my work," she would press the children's hands and be gone, turning round under the apple tree to nod to them. What a beautiful picture it was to see her standing with her fair hair and haughty figure under the white blossoms or the ripe fruit on the tree!

What was Anna doing in the lane? This — this was her pure, secret joy. But now, this summer — this summer it was rather different — it was misery, it was bliss.

"Mother cares nothing for me. Heinke is still a child. Hett thinks of no one but himself. Pete is far away. What am I to do with my life? Grete Deeken married at nineteen, Lisbeth Thaden at twenty. I am twenty-two, and he does not come. I am deserted. Oh! if only he were single — he who talks to me in the lane. He would want my love. Oh! how good he is. How clever. What dear eyes."

She had known him since she was a child.

Was there no young man in Hilligenlei, then, with eyes to see that the most beautiful thing in all the countryside was this glorious, youthful strength, this hidden intelligence? To take her by the hand and rejoice in the beauty of her body and of her transparent soul, which should bring up a race of strong and healthy children to cope with the evil of the world?

Oh the young men of Hilligenlei! One is diseased from a youth of dissipation; he should be a man but he drags himself along the sea wall, gasping for breath. Two others, healthy-minded young fellows enough, tramp about the country with great sticks in their hands and their eyes bent on the road, learning to talk pompously about the management of the State at an age when a man cannot see beyond the eyes of a girl and his work.

Other young folk of the middle classes get behind their father's counter as soon as they come back from service, and sit at their father's desk, and cast about them for a wife with money-bags, by which means they win a helpmeet, who, thinking more of her portion than her person, keeps portion and keys under her own control to prevent her spouse from doing anything reckless. So they sit, in their poky little shops in the poky little streets, with a view bounded by their neighbour's wall, where they never hear the fresh wind blow or realize that a clean, strong man of good courage is worth more than ten thousand pounds.

Others, when their work is finished, go and sit over their beer with the married men of the club. The old men tell coarse stories and corrupt the young, until they are too cowardly, too corrupt, for marriage and all that it involves.

No man thought of Anna Boje.

When she went past they would say, "That's a fine girl. Look how she walks!"

Whereupon the others retorted, "Don't waste time in looking at her. She hasn't got a penny, and she's waiting for a prince!"

Such are the young folk of Hilligenlei, and therefore, at two-and-twenty, Anna Boje's pure soul is tortured by a thought from which no inward struggles avail to set her free. "Oh! if he were single! and loved me! oh! what bliss that would be!"

Kai Jans was far too young for her. Once he found her alone in the kitchen. He went close up to her and implored her, "Anna — Anna, give me one kiss — once — only once in my life."

She stepped back in anger. "I ask you to leave me alone," she said. "I do not care for such jests. If you say anything of the sort again, Kai, our friendship is at an end."

One evening a few days later she was going into the garden to bring in some washing which she had put out to bleach, and saw him standing in the lane with a tall, pretty farm girl, the child of degraded parents, and herself a wanton.

When he came two days afterwards her scorn blazed out. "That's the company you choose! You, who have always talked so grandly about Hilligenlei! Did you go out into the world to look for it, and now come back to go with her!"

He was angry in his turn. "It's your fault," he cried; "yes, yours. If you only loved me, I could believe in Hilligenlei still; but now —"

She was astonished. "That's very fine! It's my fault, indeed! I will tell you something — the fault is in you yourself, Kai Jans."

CHAPTER XII.

At the end of August Kai Jans passed his leaving examination. Three days later he came up chestnut avenue to say goodbye. Anne gave him her hand with perfect composure. Heinke gave him a quick, hard squeeze and ran out of the room to cry. Kassen Wedderkop was to go with him to Hamburg, then he was to go on to Heidelberg alone.

In the evening of the same day came a letter from Pete, from Hamburg. "Anna is to come." He had always promised she should see Hamburg one day, and he should pay for her. Now he was keeping his word.

Happy in his thought of her, and in this break in the endless monotony of her existence, she surprised the two travellers by appearing at the station early next morning and accompanying them. She had never been out of Hilligenlei before, and gazed in dumb astonishment out of the window as they passed through the huge town in the train.

Pete was at the station. It was astonishing to see him there. She had always seen him in Hilligenlei before, and now there he stood, in this strange place, among strange people, and glanced sharply at her and nodded. He had always been like that from his childish days, and that was what she so loved in him — that manly determination.

"Well," said Kassen Wedderkop, "you be off and show Anna Hamburg, but meet me this evening at seven in the coffee-room of the 'Imperial' at Altona. Sit so that you can see into the bar. I shall bring two friends who were with me in the East — both natives of Hilligenlei. Off with you!"

They put Anna between them and went down to the Jungfernstieg. He showed her the post-office and the monument, and the huge banks and hotels along the Alster; then they went across the market down to the harbour where they took steamer.

Her first excess of astonishment soon wore off. She looked at everything with calm, rather wondering eyes, as much as

to say, "What is all this to me? What have all these people, all these buildings, to do with me? If there was only one person who belonged to me!" Now and then, when she could do so unobserved, she looked sideways at her brother and thought of her childhood, till her heart warmed to him, and she grieved that he was always so cool and curt towards her, as she thought, "Kai Jans is not nearly so self-confident."

He in his turn looked at her unobserved, and thought, "What a change! She stood bare-footed on the shore in a frock that only just reached down to her knees, and she had cut her little foot on a mussel-shell, so that it bled. Now she is a big, handsome girl!"

Kai Jans looked straight in front of him, searching for the *Gude Wife* among the forest of masts.

On board the *Gude Wife* steam was puffing, chains rattling, voices shouting. Kai Jans went fore to see the fo'c'sle and the men, but Pete and Anna went aft. In answer to her whispered question, he showed her where he stood when he was on duty, and she stood there gazing over the big ship and up into the topmasts, trying to see, with the help of pictures she remembered, what her brother saw in times of sunshine or of storm. She took hold of his hand gently, without looking at him, and then followed him down the companion. "This is where I live, do you see?"

"Dear me!" she cried in genuine surprise, "what a tiny place!"

He laughed.

"Well, remember, the great Pe Ontjes had this room when he was second."

"Where is he now?" she asked indifferently.

"To-day he is in Hamburg. To-morrow he's going over with the men to Glasgow to his ship. He means to do two voyages on it and then come home to Hilligenlei and see if his father's business can be expanded."

"Oh!" She had already heard as much in Hilligenlei.

"Weren't you surprised," he said, "at my getting a second mate's berth so soon and on such a good ship?"

"Yes, indeed. You can't think how delighted mother and all of us were."

"Well, there's something more for you to tell her!" After some rummaging in his locker he produced a *Shipbuilding*

Journal, and, after showing her the title, opened it. "Look here!" She read: "The Employment of Steam Engines or Motors on Large Sailing Vessels," and underneath, "By Pete Boje."

Pressing her hand to her breast, she looked at him with sparkling eyes. "Oh, Petel!" she said.

"I can tell you," said he, "I had a lot of trouble over it. Not the matter, you know — that I saw plainly enough — but expressing it. That was my difficulty. One is never sure if one hasn't been to a high school. Well, I got the post on that, you see. And at the same time I showed this model, this one here, to our owner. Of course, you can't understand it, but it shows how the carrying capacity can be increased. That's it! Eyes open, ready, aye, ready, forwards! That's the thing, and I am like that."

"What started you on such ideas originally?"

"Oh! that was the old boy on the *Clara* — do you remember? He put me on the track."

"What has happened to him?"

"They said he died in hospital in Lisbon."

He spread the newspaper out once more, laughing happily. "It was great fun doing it, I can tell you," he said, putting it away again.

Anna leant across the table to look at the pictures nailed against the wall. How strange to see, in this unfamiliar little room, a picture of their parents taken soon after their marriage, and the picture of Heinke and Hett taken when they were ten. And there was her picture, at eighteen, her eyes full of confusion because the photographer, a young man, had accidentally touched her hair in putting her head in the position he wanted. Who was that next to her, with a short, fair beard? Recognizing Pe Ontjes Lau, she gave a sharp, suspicious look at the picture and turned away.

When she had seen everything and admired the cabin, they all three left the ship and spent the day in going about — along the Alster, to the picture galleries, up and down the principal streets.

Towards evening they were sitting, it being warm enough, under the glass roof in front of the Alster pavilion, when who should come up but a tall, elegant gentleman with a round, beardless face and large eyes shining with friendliness. In a

word, Tjark Dusenschön. He bowed to Anna, tall hat in hand, and said with a kind of friendliness, "With your permission, ladies and gentlemen, I will sit near you. I generally take a cup of coffee here," he said, "when business goes well, and as that fortunately occurs frequently, I frequently take coffee here."

The waiter came hurrying up and took his overcoat, his white silk scarf, and his silver-mounted cane. He seated himself comfortably beside them. "I recognized you on your entrance because I recognized Pete."

"Why do you never come to Hilligenlei," said Anna, in a voice of suppressed anger, "when your grandmother lives there?"

Tjark looked at her calmly and said, "I have no necessity to go there, Miss Boje, and my grandmother earns her living by her work. Why should I go to Hilligenlei? It is not as if there were any business to be done there, and I have no time to make excursions merely for pleasure."

"What are you doing now, then?" asked Kai Jans.

"I have been head assistant for the last five years. At present I am with a money-broker."

He looked at them all in turn, just as he had done once in Jeff's smithy.

"A money-broker," said Anna. "What in the world's that?"

"I will explain to you shortly, Miss Boje," said Tjark, politely turning to her. "There are people who need money for some undertaking or other, and there are other people who have money which they wish to employ. Well, they don't know of one another, do you see? My business is to bring them together. Waiter! For example, if the waiter wants to set up a hotel, but has no capital of his own, I can very possibly supply him with it. A cup of black, please, waiter."

The Hilligenlei children stared. Old Stiena Dusenschön was wont to stand in front of the long house, with her bonnet strings flying, and tell wonderful stories of Tjark — Tj-a-a-rk — and behold! it was all true! How elegantly he was dressed, and what an air of ease and respectability there was about him!

"And you, Kai! What are you doing?"

"I'm going first to Heidelberg and then Berlin to study theology and modern languages."

"Theology! I'm glad of that," said Tjark, thoughtfully. "The masses need clergymen; they are their natural leaders. You, as a workman's son, will understand the people. And you, Miss Boje! Are you still at home?"

"There is enough to do there," said Anna.

"If you should ever think of a situation in Hamburg, please write to me. I have connections with several very good families, and could probably secure you something suitable."

"I should rather like to go now," said Anna. "I have been walking about all day, and should be glad to rest a little."

"I shall remain here for a while," said Tjark, getting up and politely helping Anna on with her jacket.

"I cannot bear that man," said Anna when they were on their way. "Everything about him is false, from his round, shining face and his worldly wisdom upwards."

Pete and Kai were silent. Tjark had impressed them.

By eight o'clock they were at the Imperial Hotel in Altona, and, asking rather shyly for the coffee-room, they sat down. When the waiter came up they ordered a bottle of wine, for the first time in their lives. Pete ordered it, and none of them ever forgot the occasion—a bottle of the lightest Moselle. They then ventured to look about them. They became more sure of themselves, and began to feel comfortable when they saw that the groups at the other tables were continuing their usual conversation. Anna soon observed a solitary guest sitting sideways at a little table with a bottle of claret in front of him, who kept looking across to them without moving. His dress, of dark-grey cloth, seemed to indicate that he belonged to the well-to-do tradesman class; there was nothing remarkable about his broad head or the fat, white hands folded together on the table; and yet there was something about him that made her anxious to see his face more distinctly.

She forced herself to look away, only to look again after a brief space of time.

He was looking with a dull, fixed stare at them from under his heavy, pendulous eyelids. She became uncomfortable, and turning right away, leaned against the table. Kai Jans, having cast a cheerful glance round the room, now turned to her with lifted glass. At that moment he caught sight of the stranger behind her with an immediate sensation of discomfort. He turned so as not to see him any longer, and drawing a deep

breath, said, "Now, over the Elbe and out into the world!" With a friendly nod to the other two, he drank.

At that moment Kassen Wedderkop appeared, limping slightly, but in a good humour for all that, and behind him his two friends—a short man with red hair, and a tall man with fair hair, all three portly, comfortable-looking men about fifty.

"Hallo!" said the little red-haired man. "Are we to sit with these young folk?"

"You behave!" said Kassen Wedderkop. "It's a long time since you sat with anyone so young and charming. Look at Anna Boje. Have you had a good day, child?"

The tall fair-haired man sat down next to Anna.

Fresh wine was put on the table.

"Have I ever told you," he said to Wedderkop, "how I spent a week with a beautiful young girl? A long time ago. It's a story that goes with wine, and one that can be told in a young lady's presence."

He looked at Anna with an expression of friendly politeness.

"Would you like to hear it? You two old fellow-travellers know that I spent my childhood in Hilligenlei, my boyhood in Itzehoe. There were two of us—my brother and myself; we had no sister. We never left the town. We shared the society of our parents—very stiff, very respectable, for our parents were very proper in their views. We only knew young girls so far as dancing with them in black coats and white gloves at balls, or bowing politely when we passed them in the streets. We were like our parents. We went on in this way until I was twenty-seven and my brother twenty-five. He also was in business.

"One day, out of sheer boredom and idle curiosity, my brother made a little expedition to visit a distant cousin of ours—a clergyman—who lived under a thatched roof in a remote country village in our district. Just as he had sat down to tea between his cousin and his wife in came a tall, beautiful girl, the daughter of a neighbouring landowner, who was staying with them at the time. After tea he seized the opportunity of walking in the garden with her for an hour.

"A week later he went again. A fortnight later they met secretly for the third time. Then they were engaged, and soon afterwards she came to stay with us at home for a week.

"This week was the most beautiful and memorable time in my whole life. In those days we two good, stupid young men learnt to know something the very existence of which we had not suspected — something more wonderful than we had dreamed that the world contained — for we learned in those days to know a beautiful young girl, sound in mind and body, as innocent, as natural as if only created yesterday by the hand of God. We had learned in school the different kinds of rhinoceros that are to be found in Africa. We had learned what an opera was, the meaning of foreign trade, and how to open an oyster. But *this* was a creature such as we had never come across. We had no knowledge of it, subjective or objective. Now, suddenly, we learnt to know it.

"I can give you no idea of how wonderful it all was — how unspeakably happy that week was for us. My brother and I were lost in wonder at this piece of creation. It was summer. She lay, in all her beauty, on the grass in our garden, clad in a loose garment, my brother at her head, and I at her feet. For you must remember that it never occurred to me to torture myself, because her young beauty and purity did not belong to me. No; my heart was full of nothing but joy. I rejoiced in her as in a beautiful sister who had just come to me. And it was not that I had never seen beauty before. There were many pretty girls in the neighbourhood. No; the wonder of it all was the exquisite un-self-consciousness with which she permitted us to see the loveliness of her body and her mind. Every movement of her limbs, every word that she uttered, roused my admiration. She moved with the grace with which a younger, tender wood bends and sways under the breath of the rustling wind. Her words were the speech of a blossoming lime tree. Our eyes followed every movement of her lips.

"The week passed by. I had to go to Hamburg, and soon afterwards to China." He looked thoughtfully into his glass. "Whether that week has kept me always single, I don't know. It was the most beautiful time in my life, that I do know."

Taking up his glass and turning to Anna Boje, he pledged her, "It is your fault that I told the story."

The others bowed to her. Kai Jans looked at the delicate flush on her face, and thought, "How beautiful she is!"

Kassen Wedderkop refilled their glasses, and for a time they sat chatting and looking at the people sitting at the tables

or going to and fro. Anna turned to Pete and said to him in a low voice, "Look at the stout man in grey behind me—rather to the side." Pete leaned so as to look past his sister, and saw the man still sitting behind his bottle of claret. There was something unnatural in his stolid immobility and the fixed stare of his goggle eyes, still directed to their table, which suggested that his mind was elsewhere—something of the uncanny feeling of an empty house. Pete turned quickly away. "One of the claret-bibbing Hamburg Philistines, the sort that lets other people do the working and thinking for them. What does he matter to us?"

Wedderkop turned to the short, red-haired man. "There's something I want to ask you about. Do you remember the voyage we three went together from Vladivostock to San Francisco on the Russian steamer? I never experienced anything like it in my life. We held on our course, driving, day after day, through grey waves that were like mountains, through the icy, driving mist, through snowstorms that raged from morning until night, on, though the engines were rotten, and there was no navigation worth the name and no look-out of any sort. We three, the only Germans among a pack of Russians, drinking and cursing in front of their icons. We two, that tall fellow there and myself, were in a tremendous state of mind, for we seemed at any moment likely to be charging down the Milky Way into eternity. But you seemed quite detached. What was it?"

The little man looked thoughtfully at his friend out of his intelligent eyes, and then jovially towards Anna, and began: "I, too, can tell a story that goes well with wine and is fit for a pretty girl to hear. As you know, I was born in the parsonage at Hilligenlei. The house is just the same as it was then. My father was rather a stiff, narrow-minded man—too busy to trouble much about his children. My mother—I do not like to speak of it before others, and I do not know how far she was to blame and how far my father; but however that may be—she ran away. She is dead now. We children had a hard time—father cold and hard, mother always with bitter words on her lips. Then afterwards only father. The result was that when we came to be confirmed, I, the parson's son, scoffed at the words my father spoke from the pulpit more bitterly than any of the others. I was just the same when I was

an apprentice in Hamburg — a sophisticated cynic. A few years later, when I was two-and-twenty, I went to Hongkong.

"I had been there about two years when I was introduced to a young married couple. He was English, she the daughter of a Hamburg merchant. She must have been about thirty at the time, blooming with the health and happiness of wife and mother, and she soon saw how distorted and unnatural my point of view was. Pitying me she began to help me. Her understanding was marvellous. She used to let me prate and criticise, and mock and almost acquiesce, but whenever I cast anything down in the mud and trampled on it she used to pick it up and put it away in some clean place, just like a mother carefully putting away a stiff, old-fashioned dress which has been the grandmother's pride. And so my hardness was gradually melted.

"Although she was still quite young, she had been all over the world with her husband. She had seen Catholicism in its severest form in South America. She had stood by the sick-bed of a heathen sage in Japan. She had a Catholic friend in Hongkong who had none but Latin books upon his shelves, and she had read widely. She knew Plato and Marcus Aurelius, and, above all, Goethe. She never attacked anything or anyone. She was always ready to yield. But from her quiet and gentle talk I came to see the humble reverence for that mysterious power that transcends human comprehension which formed the sound basis of her soul; and, as I saw, my nature became purified of the falsehood that had penetrated it, and developed into a quiet sincerity.

"Of course, I fell desperately in love with her, and thought I could not live apart from her — so good, so beautiful, so clever. One day I realized that if I were not to be ruined I must go. I went.

"My going was made a little easier by a secret hope. When I was at their home I used, with her permission, to look at the pictures about the rooms, and among them I kept coming upon one of her younger sister, who was twenty-one, and very like her, and lived in Hamburg with her parents. So, I thought, 'I shall go to Hamburg and marry the sister, her double.'

"I got leave of absence, came to Hamburg, visited the parents with messages from their daughter, and saw her sister. She was just like my beloved — exactly alike in appearance,

with the same friendly gaiety in her brown eyes. She was clever, too, and knew Marcus Aurelius and Goethe, and she was kind to me. But something was wanting. Her soul had not the depths, the still blue depths, the reverence for the eternal mysteries. She could jest at religion."

He gazed thoughtfully in front of him.

"I could not marry her," he said. "My thoughts went back to the other, living in happiness in Hongkong. They still go there. Those two years in Hongkong were the happiest of my life."

Raising his head, he looked at Anna.

"It's your fault that I told this story. Those dear, calm eyes of yours say, 'Tell something true.' They remind me of her eyes, though yours are light — they ask for truth."

Raising his glass, he drank to her.

When they had all drunk, they sat thoughtful for a time. The ruddy light shone down on their heads. Round them blue smoke lay wreathed. Anna's hair shone bright. The pale-faced waiter looked at the pleasant little party, watching the movements of the second old man's grey head.

The stranger sat still in his place, his glass in front of him and his hands folded round it, staring with his expressionless, round grey eyes at the old and young children from Hilligenlei.

They ordered more wine, and drank gaily. Kai Jans, with his father's roguish look in his eyes, looked at Anna. "Our healths, Anna! I shall come home in May!"

Anna looked at him with friendly eyes and laughed.

Then the tall man, who had sat at the foot of the farmer's daughter in the Itzehoe garden while his brother sat at her head, said, "Your story, Wedderkop, took place not far from here, I know, on the other side of the Alster."

"I don't think you know much about it," said Kassen, "but I do not mind telling you. It's short enough, and, like the others, it goes with wine, and will do for a girl to hear."

"That time, when I came home with you two from San Francisco, though only a simple youth, I succeeded in gaining the good opinion of one of the most prominent business men. I got to know him in my chief's office, and pleased him so much that I was invited to his fine house on the other side of the Alster, where I spent five happy weeks."

"He was an excellent man of business, and still has a high

reputation, but with all his keen sense for business and business advantage, he never lost sight of the inner ideal side of the profession of a merchant. Of those men of business who regarded the making of money, and yet more money, as the sole aim of life, he spoke with a bitter yet reasoned scorn, rising to lofty enthusiasm in his description of the kingdom of the true merchant, whose aim is to see that nothing is lost or wasted in the world, but everything distributed to the best advantage all over its surface, and put at the service of those who fight against the evils and increase the joys of life. Many an hour would he spend walking up and down his garden with me suggesting thoughts to me which deepened my nature and widened my outlook upon life. And when we walked thus his youngest daughter nearly always came with us. If by any chance she was not there he would call her. Whether he brought us together with any secret intention I don't know. I do know that he was fond of me. Anyhow, she was young and beautiful, and wore her simple, elegant dress as a young birch its leafy crown. The garden was full of glorious flowers and trees, the house as full of valuable old possessions as it was of goodness. And so five weeks went by.

"Then the lady of the house came home from a visit to her married children. She was quite unlike her husband and her youngest child. Before them she did not show her true self, but she was an arrogant, ambitious woman. She did not like me, and saw that I did not come again.

"So I went back to China and stayed fifteen years there. Why I remained single I hardly know. Was it because I thought of the beautiful child in the simple, elegant dress, with whom I had walked in the lovely garden by the side of that good, gifted man? I don't know. Certainly, I felt I must not fall below that ideal.

"After I had been away for fifteen years I was hit by a Korean bullet up-country. I returned to Hamburg, and after depositing my little capital with some friends, retired to Hilligenlei. Now I busy myself with the thoughts of which he spoke to me in that beautiful, sunny garden — thoughts of the great, royal merchant — and even now the thing that gives me the greatest pleasure of all others is any little mark of recognition which he sends me. He is an old man now. I know nothing of his child."

Lifting his glass to Anna Boje, he pledged her.

"Well," said the tall man, "I should now like to know what youth thinks of the three old bachelors!"

"Fire away, Pete," said Wedderkop. "Give us your opinion!"

"You are like sailors, all three," said Pete, laughing. "Going to sea and going to China comes to the same thing. If you had stayed in Hamburg you would have all got married."

This judgment annoyed the three, and they refused to accept it, saying, "He's decrying us! It's not true. We won't drink with him!"

"Now then, Anna! Speak your mind freely. Have we remained single without any reason at all?"

"It seems to me," said Anna, graciously, "that you all three wanted the very best, and remained single because you were unable to attain it. A girl can understand and respect such a feeling. Your bachelordom does you all three credit."

They were much pleased, and toasted her, laughing.

"Now," said the tall man, "now for the third. I have all the time regarded him with suspicion. His eyes are too deep-set for one to see them. Your opinion, sir."

"I agree with Anna Boje," said Kai Jans, his eyes sparkling. "You all wanted something pure, something holy, and that is why you are single. You were right, because so you have kept your purity."

The three looked rather shamefacedly into their glasses. Then the tall man looked up and said seriously, "I don't like to lead the young into such an error. Once, indeed, in our youth we have seen holiness; but, alas! that has not prevented us from becoming sinners afterwards."

Kai Jans shrank back, and his face grew deadly pale. He tried to rise. As he did so the stranger, with his dark, empty eyes fixed upon him, rose also. But Kai sat down again, and stared silently at the table.

"We must go," said Wedderkop in a depressed tone. "Shall you stay a little?"

"Yes," said Pete, calmly, "we'll wait a little."

The three went away.

They were hardly outside when Kai smote the table with his hand, and cried in bitter scorn, "Do you see? That's how it is! Hilligenlei, indeed!" He gave a mocking laugh.

He was still laughing when the stranger came up to their table, and, sitting down opposite to him, said in his dull voice, raising his eyes heavily to his face, "I heard their stories, and foresaw how it would all turn out."

Anna Boje cast a quick, timid glance at him. His eyes were dull and bleared, like the eyes of a fish. Her heart seemed in her throat with fright. She tried in vain to turn to Pete.

Kai Jans leaned forward heavily. "I am the sort of person, you know," he said, "have been from my childhood, who takes everything fearfully seriously, oh! so seriously. Yes; don't you know, once — I really thought — why, yes — once I went all through the world because — because I always thought that somehow the world *must* be holy; but latterly —" he laughed again, a mirthless laugh. "Now the old people come with their stories, and they must know — they are old. Oh! I feel so strange. Yes, I believe I have for some time come to the conclusion that everything — everything is indifferent — nothing matters. Who are you, pray?"

Anna turned anxiously to Pete, and said, "Shall we go?"

"I wanted to wait a little," said Pete, casting a quick glance round him.

"Who for?"

"I met Pe Ontjes yesterday," he said in a low tone, "and told him you were coming, and he promised to come at a certain time. He hasn't much time. But I thought he would have been here by now."

"I could have told you he wouldn't come," she said sharply.

At that moment Kai Jans sprang to his feet and cried out, smiting the table, "I tell you what, you two Bojes. *You* seek for Hilligenlei. Yes, you seek for it. And tell the others — tell big Pe Ontjes Lau and little Heinke — she will be more beautiful than you one day, Antje — and tell Tjark Dusen-schön, the princely fool! Why should *I* always torture myself! Do you go and seek for Hilligenlei. I tell you. I shall look out for some other land."

Anna stood up, quite pale. "Come," she said. "He is drunk. How awful! Everyone is looking at us. Come Pete."

The stranger stood beside Kai. "Walk a bit of the way with me," he said.

The waiter came and helped Anna on with her coat.

"Who is that?" said Pete, pointing after the two going towards the passage, "that man in grey?"

"We don't know who he is," said the waiter. "He comes here sometimes and drinks claret, and always manages to make up to some party — generally young people. And then the fun is always at an end."

He looked at their darkened faces.

"The rascal!" said Pete. "I wonder who he is?"

Anna sobbed, anxious and ashamed. "Go after Kai Jans! Oh! I am so ashamed of having been seen by everybody."

"Go after him!" said Pete, scornfully. "No, thank you. He may go where he pleases. It is just as well that his folly is at an end at last. Seek for Hilligenlei, indeed! The creature is quite off his head. *We* seek for Hilligenlei, forsooth!" He took her arm and went on with her, leaving her at her hotel.

Anna went upstairs, undressed, went to bed, and dreamed a marvellous dream.

She heard her name called, clear and shrill, "Anna Boje," and knew that the voice of God was calling her. "Yes, Lord?"

"Kai Jans has begun to seek for Hilligenlei," said God, "and now you must seek for it. You know, someone in your town must seek and find it."

"Oh, Lord God!" she said. "We Bojes — we'll never find it, and Pe Ontjes Lau hasn't learnt nearly enough."

"What am I to do, then?" said God.

"Oh, Lord," she said, "you can be quite sure that Kai Jans will begin to look for it again. Do you suppose he will even stay for a year with that staring, grey care-for-nothing? He will soon be on fire again — he is like that. And if he begins again I have a younger sister called Heinke, more beautiful and more holy than I am, who will help him to find it."

God raised His finger and said, "You are to seek for it, too."

She shrank back. "Lord," she cried, "I cannot. I am such an unhappy, restless mortal."

God spoke seriously to her and disappeared.

Next morning she went back to Hilligenlei, troubled and disturbed.

CHAPTER XIII.

AND when Anna got home Heinke told her that the three from the lane had gone with the invalid mother, who was to undergo a prolonged treatment somewhere. The return of the others depended on her condition. Heinke said it was by no means impossible that they would give up their house here and go south, somewhere on the Rhine, on her account.

Anna pressed her red lips together. "Indeed!" she said.

Now she was quite alone. No one cared for her, no one asked after her, no one troubled about her. She would gradually wither and fade away. She laughed in wild and bitter pain.

Her dumb suffering lasted for a week. Then came the ninth of September.

As long as she lives Anna will never forget that hot, sunny ninth of September, not though she lives to ninety, nor think that any sin was committed on that day by herself or by another. Any sin there was has indeed been expiated by bitter sorrow, the love that can cover a multitude of sins.

On the ninth of September, soon after midday, a quite unusual time, her three friends stood in the lane and knocked as usual at the gate. Anna was standing by the grate, but she heard, and came running out at once. Their eyes shone with pleasure at seeing her again, and they cried, "How lovely to meet again."

His eyes glistened with joy. He looked less tired than before, when he used to work hard every day. Excessive happiness made her more confiding than she had ever been; it seemed to unlock her heart.

"You dear, silly things," she cried, kneeling down in exquisite confusion. "Knack" went her knees.

Then the three explained that in eight weeks they were to leave Hilligenlei and go south to the mother; but as long as they were there they wanted to see Anna every day—every single one; and would she go to the wood with them this after-

noon? "There's an open space there," said the littlest one. "We'll dance there."

"You must put on very few clothes," said the elder child, "because it's very hot, and you are to dance."

It was a hot, breathless day, the ninth of September.

They found the short-grass plot at the edge of the wood, a spot of sunshine hidden away in the dark cavernous circle of the twenty-year-old pine trees. There she danced on the short turf, first with the little child, then with the bigger one; and then he asked her to dance alone; then to stay standing as she was. And she did everything he asked her. He was so dear, so playful with his children; he asked her so gently, with such goodness and happiness in his eyes, that her heart beat fast under his gaze.

Suddenly he came up to her and said in a choking voice, "Do you know that I can see your dear limbs through your dress?"

She looked at him in painful confusion. "It was so hot," she said piteously. "I wanted to be able to have a good romp with the children."

"Do you know you are the most beautiful girl in the world?"

She stepped back toward the pine trees, looking at him with timid entreaty in her eyes.

"I mustn't. I mustn't."

He didn't listen. He knew she loved him.

"You have loved me ever since your childhood. I have seen it in your eyes."

"I didn't know," she murmured. "I never knew it, never. I never thought of this."

He did not press her; he only spoke of his great joy. "Oh, you! you are so brave, so noble. You are three-and-twenty, and your wonderful soul and body are yours alone — how wonderful, you don't know. You dear, beautiful woman." He seized her hands. She let him take both hands, looking at him still with timid entreaty in her eyes.

"Oh," she said, breathing hard, "never shall I love anyone as I love you."

They went through the wood, the hot sun penetrating obliquely through the trees, the children in front. Her head was bent, his eyes and thoughts were all for her. When they

came to the quiet house, the children went into the garden with the maid. He put his arm round her and led her into his room. She turned to him in sore distress, saying, "Dear, tell me I am not doing wrong—promise me that. Oh! I cannot help it—I cannot help it. I never knew before, but now I see. For a long time I have loved you—more than anything in the world. To think that you—you love me! Now I know. How I have longed for that. Oh! I have been so terribly lonely. Be good to me, help me. Oh! my darling!"

For seven weeks the glory lasted—seven weeks of joy. Unholy? No; holy. Seven weeks in the wonderland of faerie, weeks of poignant joy and sorrow. For seven weeks Anna Boje was a happy, unhappy woman.

She did not ask him, "Stay with me and let the other go." She did not say, "I don't know how I am to live when you are gone." Had she asked him this, he would have acquiesced, for the wonder of it was as great for him as it was for her.

She did not ask him to do it. She would not have accepted it had he offered. She could not have purchased her happiness at the price of another's misery. She knew the day would come, come soon, dark and terrible, when all her glory fell in ruins around her—the holy, ah! not the unholy, glory.

At this time her mother said to Heinke, "What can have come over Anna? She is affectionate with us, and talks in a way she has not done for years."

"Yes," said Heinke. "I have noticed it, but I don't know why it is."

And the girls whom she met from time to time said to one another, "What has come over Anna Boje? She is so gay and friendly, and how pretty she is!"

The day came.

The southern physician decided that the wife must stay there in the warm valley. The North Sea air was too damp and strong for her—too cold and salt.

He drew a deep breath and looked at Anna. "Oh! the air is fresh and bracing here, and you—you are so dear, so beautiful."

"You must go," said she, tears starting to her eyes. "You must forget me. I must see what will become of me."

She got the children ready for the journey. She could see the despair in his eyes as she felt, for the last time, the mad

fever of his love. She saw them off at the station, shook him by the hand, and said, grinding her teeth together: "Kind regards to mother."

Then she went home alone, saying to herself "I shall never see him again."

When she got home she found a postcard from Kai Jans with a brief account of his doings. Across the corner in small letters were the words: "Have you found Hilligenlei? I have discovered something very like it." Underneath was a pair of eyes drawn in blue ink.

"How funny of him to write to you," said Heinke; "he has always written to me before. What does that mean in the corner?"

"I expect he's in love with someone with blue eyes," said Anna.

Heinke went silently out into the garden and wept under the apple tree.

Hard times followed for the little house under the chestnuts.

Pete went on a distant voyage to Samoa, and his sister did not know or share his hopes and plans. Hett went to an office in Kiel. After eight weeks there he wrote for the first time secretly to Anna, asking her for money. She sent him thirty shillings from her savings. He did not even thank her. She thought "The lot of the elder sister already! Professor Töner's three daughters stayed at home toiling and moiling for the two sons: that's how it will be!"

It was twenty-five years since Hella Boje had danced out of her slippers at Ringerang's dance: she grew grey and matronly now, and her heart hardened as she grieved over the absence of her two darlings. To Anna, who had returned to her old reserve, she seldom spoke: for Heinke she had nothing but hard words: she was obstinate, indolent, unkind; and everything she did only seemed to make it worse. Heinke, whose only faults were the silent pride inherited from her mother and the intellectual keenness of her father, wept many secret tears, drying them to look at the picture postcards which Kai Jans sent her from Heidelberg and the neighbourhood, and she kept in order in her song-book.

At times Anna tried to pull herself together. She would try to make a dress for herself or her sister, but the long sitting

and the irritating work annoyed her so, that she ended by undoing all she had done and handing it over to the dressmaker. In the evening she would sometimes secretly try to read her father's books up in her own room; but the lofty pictures they conjured up did not thrill her: she soon let the book fall, unable to find the path to beauty, to look round the narrow little room, fit background for her empty hopeless life.

In the winter she was invited to a girls' party, and forced herself to go. Things went merrily enough. The younger girls, up to about eighteen, among whom was Heinke, sat in one room, telling harmless but silly stories, and laughing till some of them could not sit upright. The elder girls, ranging up to eight-and-twenty, sat in another room: they soon got upon the subject of marriage. Those over five-and-twenty did most of the talking, while the others listened.

"To be married to a nice man — that's the best there is."

"But there are not many nice men."

They began to discuss the possible young men, speaking with bitter contempt of seven or eight who did not marry either because they were too self-indulgent and lazy, or because they were incapable of it.

One girl said harshly: "Young men now-a-days are all cripples. Marriage gets more and more uncommon."

"Well," said another, "Frieda got married only the other day. . . and Gertrud."

"Yes, but then Frieda had five hundred pounds, and Gertrud — well, she was twenty-five, you know."

"Many are called but few chosen."

"I could bear not being married if it was because I was an ugly little thing — but simply because I have no money bags! that seems to me a scandal. Think of Frieda and her five hundred pounds; she's a perfect skeleton! How could anyone want to sleep with her?"

"Come, you are going rather too far."

"What of that? Don't the Socialists say that the accursed property system is coming to an end? If people were only valued for strength and beauty! I say, Anna — then you would get a prince and I an earl. No one can deny that I am tall and strong, or that my nose is a good shape, and my hair long and beautiful." She laughed, plunging both hands into her fair hair.

"After all, most of us do marry — far the most. Some girls don't want to marry — it does not appeal to them."

One of the girls laughed — "Children, I will tell you a delicious story — you must keep it quiet, or I won't tell you a word more. . . . A few weeks ago Lena Bruhn and I went to Bindorf: coming back we missed our train and had to walk back to Hilligenlei. However, on the way we got frightened, and went into Sothbier's inn — you know, an old man with the two daughters. Well, the two girls were good enough to give us their rooms and go and sleep somewhere else. I went to sleep — Lena too; but about midnight someone knocked at my window — knocked and knocked: and then a voice said 'Why won't you let me in? Why not, girl? What has come into your head all at once. Let me in, I say! What's the matter — you've always let me; why won't you now, all of a sudden?' . . . And so it went on for a whole hour; and it happened just the same to Lena.

"Next morning early we went into the kitchen. The two girls were standing by the fire making the coffee. 'Tell me one thing,' said Lena; 'would you marry if you could? Come now?' They looked at us quite shamefacedly and said 'We don't think of marrying — no. I don't expect we shall.' Yes, that's how it is. Of course I want to get married — everyone does."

"I tell you what," said another, "if you really want to get married you must look like the daughter of the Tonndorf clerk: she was neither pretty nor rich, but she was sharp. She thought 'If I stay "Miss" I will be an old maid.' So she went to Hamburg as chambermaid in a very smart house and married the gardener. Afterwards her sister got a baker in the same way, and she has six children, and they live on the rolls left over in the morning, and are all as hearty and healthy as possible."

"You're making up again," they cried; "you never keep to the truth."

"Anyhow," said another, "I could only marry the right sort of man — good and clever."

"Oh, yes," they all cried; "that's necessary."

"Nonsense," said another, bitterly; "better be unhappily married than not married at all."

The others disagreed. "Oh, no! Think of . . . and . . . Ten thousand times better to be single."

"Yes, but she has children of her own."

"Children — that is something!"

"To be an old maid, with no one to love, no one to care for."

"Well, think of Hannah Behrens! She *is* a happy old maid. Yes, really — there is no mistake about it. She is thoroughly happy, although she is thirty-two and single — really happy."

Some shrugged their shoulders. "Yes, there are some people like that; but they have buttermilk in their veins, and had much better not marry. *We* are not like that — better dead than live single. What do you think, Anna Boje?"

"Anna takes things calmly — an icy queen."

One among them, however, divined the passion latent in Anna, and looked at her with deep interest. This was the daughter of an official who, having from her childhood shown a wonderful feeling for line and colour, and great deftness of hand, had been sent, at her mother's encouragement, to the Polytechnic at Kiel. Having then turned to photography she was now, at twenty-four, manageress and part owner with an art dealer in a big town, earning a good salary. Just now she was paying a visit to her home and sitting among the friends of her childhood. Her keen quiet eyes sought out Anna Boje.

Anna, who had always liked her because she was sincere and natural, looked at her, saying:

"If one had a gift like yours —!"

"Yes," said the other, "if one had had an independent profession, like yours!"

The little artist looked at them, only saying: "Yes. . . . yes."

Thereupon, the conversation was brought to an end by a girl of twenty-eight, a clever, serious-minded girl, who spent her time in nursing an invalid father: "Those who say that they find complete satisfaction in a profession are either lying or naturally unfitted for marriage. What good is a profession for the rest of us? We don't want to look after other people's children, to teach other people's children, attend to other people's business, and nurse sick people whom we don't know: we want to love, to care for, to suffer for, yes, and to die for what belongs to us: that's our *Hilligenlei*."

Thus they spoke openly of their need. Not one among them was ugly. All, except one, who was a little queer, were fresh, sweet-natured, healthy girls.

Silence fell upon them for a space. Then they began to talk in twos and threes, and gradually grew merry, and laughed again.

When Anna Boje got up to go, rather sooner than the others, the little artist accompanied her.

"Can't you still become a teacher?" she said timidly.

"I can't manage it," said Anna, in a troubled voice; "I lose my temper at once. I haven't a single gift of any sort."

"You are sure to get married," said the other comfortingly; "you're only twenty-three, and tall and beautiful, and clever. Who will get married if not you?"

Anna shrugged her shoulders, and said bitterly: "No one has asked me yet, not a single person —"

"Tilda Peters is quite right," continued the other; "a profession is not enough to make us happy. It may satisfy those who are somehow weak and colourless, but those who are strong long for a husband and children. It is true they say one can suppress it. . . ."

"Suppress it!" cried Anna, scornfully; "I might as well crush in my eyes and my bosom!"

"It is terrible," said her little friend in a low tone; "terrible. Many suffer in silence and become dulled by pain. Anguish drives others to steal secretly what they cannot get openly and honourably. The power of the Church and respectability used to be strong enough to say 'submit,' but now-a-days in big towns who cares for the Church or respectability? They say 'We cannot be deprived of hearth and cradle.' They take their share, and so, what ought to be pure joy becomes a sin and sorrow. It is terribly, terribly hard for thousands of girls in our towns."

Anna looked shyly at the dark dainty face: "What do your parents think of such ideas?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "My father goes to the club every evening, hears licentious stories, and tells some of his own; mother was married at eighteen and does not understand me. And that is perhaps the hardest of all. We, the children of a new age, are orphans."

Anna accompanied her to her home, and then pursued her way through the dark streets in utter despair.

"I am not needed at home. I have no talent. Must I go to a strange house, serve strange people, look on at their happiness? or do some dull, monotonous work that leads to nothing? Go I must. I am twenty-three, I can't stay at home any longer. Heinke is too young to go — I must."

As she went down the harbour street her misery grew more poignant every moment, and roused the dark thoughts that slumbered in the dim recesses of her mind, that slumber in every heart. "If a letter came from him. . . . a black-edged letter . . . if she were dead . . . Oh, how happy I should be! . . . I should cry out for sheer happiness! Think of the waiting! . . . then, then we should see each other again. . . . I should go and meet them at the station! . . . How happy I shall make you three! How you shall laugh with me! I shall be so sweet and good to you — Oh, no — she lives; she is getting better. . . . Oh, if she were to die! She has had ten years of utter joy — ten long, lovely years . . . give me ten . . . three . . . one — give me one year; then I will gladly die — oh, gladly. A year of joy without sin, without fear. . . . Oh, if she were only to die!"

She went down to the sluice, and stood there listening to the gurgling water, listening to her own thoughts. "I am wicked . . . so wicked, that the best thing would be for me to drown myself. I have no hope at all. Who would sorrow for me, who would miss me? My children sleep within me, no one wakes them. What I can do, and what I want to do is to love someone, and to care for him; but no one wants me. . . . I will wait a little while. . . . I will." She looked across to the long house. There was still a light in Rieke Thomson's room. "I will know whether there is any hope for me. I have mocked before — cards, what can they tell! . . . But when one is in such need. . . ."

She looked in front of her once more, and listened to the wind; then she rose and went up on to the dyke, and after listening to hear whether the old dame were alone, went along the passage and into the room. Rieke Thomson was sitting in her big chair, and had just turned her head to look across the bay for a light: she was stouter even than of old.

"What! Anna Boje?" said she, sharply; "what do you

want of me?" Like most people, she could not bear the Bojes because of the haughty air with which they carried their proud heads.

"I want you to put out the cards for me. I have often wanted to come before, but never had time," said Anna cheerfully.

"Everyone who comes says either 'Rieke, I want just to see your hocus pocus,' or 'I have often wanted to come before, but never had time.' As a matter-of-fact, everyone who comes comes because they are in some trouble. An evening comes to everyone who is young and in trouble, when they believe in my art. I don't think there is a single girl or a single married woman, gentle or simple, in Hilligenlei, that hasn't been to me in the last thirty years. Give me the cards, please — there on the shelf — no, further to the right — on the Bible. Give me the Bible at the same time: I must read the evening lesson."

She shuffled the cards and placed them slowly in four rows on top of one another, then slid her finger over them. "Not much money," she said slowly, "but bread enough . . . there is a fair man who is thinking of you, but cannot tell you so . . . there is something in the way. . . . And also a dark gentleman with a lady by his side." She looked up questioningly at the ripe loveliness by her side. "That's all."

Then said Anna, in an unsteady voice, "We are troubled about my brother . . . he is far away at sea . . . far away. . . . I wanted to know — there is no — no death?"

Rieke Thomson looked up again and understood it all from the hard glint in her eyes. This cruel courage pleased her, but she shook her head and said honestly: "No, there is no death there."

Anna stood up, laid sixpence on the table, and went away. She went home and slept, got up, and went on from day to day in deep depression of spirit. "In the autumn I leave home," she said; "I will find a situation in some family in Hamburg, and get Hett to come to Hamburg too, and look after him. I can see Pete there from time to time, and be his friend until he marries — that will be the end of it."

Spring came on apace: a lovely, sunny, joyous spring. Pe Ontjes Lau came to Hilligenlei; his final removal delayed because he kept accepting good berths when they were offered

to him. He came to bring Mrs. Boje messages from Pete, who had gone to Iquique on board the *Gude Wife*, and reported that the improvement which Pete had invented had proved excellent, and he would probably go over to naval engineering when a good opening offered. He then went away, and did not return. He was fully occupied in learning his father's business and trying to discover whether anything could be made of it. Until he had decided that point he must think of nothing else. Anna had not been at home; afterwards she only very occasionally met him in the street, and he merely bowed politely and went on his way. She looked up shyly, thinking, "He doesn't like me. That's a real *man*; but he doesn't like me; he will marry a farmer's daughter with money."

It was a beautiful summer, but the dead weight of depression lay heavy on her. Her mother and Heinke said little to her.

"In October I shall go to Hamburg," she thought. "I can be the fly on the wheel somewhere: a telephone clerk or something like that. I'm too stupid for anything else."

One day Anna Martens came with her husband and her first child, able to walk by now. There was something calm and dignified about her; her eyes glowed with inward happiness. She followed Anna into the kitchen and said:

"What do you think of the great Mr. Lau? That's the sort of man for you — calm and splendid."

"Don't talk nonsense," said Anna, her eyes bent on her work.

"Perhaps," said Anna, "he isn't good enough for you — you want a student!"

"Oh," said Anna, looking at her friend in astonishment, mingled with bitterness, "how little you know about it, Anna! I want someone whom I can love, someone good and true and strong — that's all. What do I care for money, or Latin and Greek?"

At that time there was in the town a young man of good family who was in a position in a bank in Berlin and had come home to be nursed back to health by his parents, having become ill through dissipation, or, as he said, through work. After a few days he became bored, and looked about him for amusement, which, being a handsome young man, and a lady-killer, he had no difficulty in finding. It soon became matter of common knowledge that several young girls had yielded them-

selves to him, although they knew that he had no thoughts of marriage. Since the honourable young men were indolent or prudent, their needs delivered them to his mercy.

One day he saw Anna Boje in the street. Recognising her with some surprise, he addressed her, asked about Pete, and formed in his own mind the resolution: "I will possess Anna Boje; it will be wonderful to teach her the meaning of love."

Towards evening he walked up and down the lane, and, on the third day, induced her to come out to him. She only wanted a man to show her that she was desirable to him. She did not go to meet him; but, walking round the houses, came out under the lime-trees in the park. He stood there where the paths diverged at the opening of the avenue, waiting for her. It was very dark.

"Anna Boje!" said he, with a laugh, approaching her. She turned round and pushed out her hands so as to send him staggering back. Then, with a few words of burning indignation, she left him.

In the excitement of her feelings she went out of the town up to the three paths. The evening was mild and beautiful. Above the dark houses of Volkmersdorf to one side of the summit the moon rose calmly, casting her peaceful light over the night. She walked slowly, still trembling in every limb. "Oh, however much I long for it . . . even if I had wanted to . . . I could not have done it. The others have done it. I cannot. Ugh! how he took hold of me!"

In the deep grass stood the big red cows, slowly tearing the grass as they ate. Under the second path the water glinted; under the third it ran audibly down in the valley beneath. Once more she came back to the perpetual subject of her thoughts. "Why must I be lonely—without love? Am I to be lonely always?" She began to brood over it, thinking gloomily that the fault lay in her, that she was joyless because her character was peculiar and disagreeable. Perhaps there was something in her parents' past which caused people to look upon her with secret contempt. She came to the bottom of the ascent, and went slowly up. To the right and left of her were the sheaves of rye; higher up the soil was broken up for the new seed. The air was heavy with fruition. The bitterness in her soul rose up and darkened everything. "How hateful all this growth and blossoming is, all this fruit bear-

ing," she thought, "how repulsive. I won't blossom and bear fruit — no. I will be buried eight feet deep in the earth, so that I can be no use even when I am dead — or else a flower or a tree might spring up out of me. Oh! the idea is hateful."

She came out on to the heath and walked upon the soft, springing ground. Beneath her in the blue haze of a July night lay the wide plain. She turned aside from the path, and sat down wearily on the wall, and, as she gazed over the beautiful peace of the wide landscape stretched out before her, she became more calm and gentle. Her thoughts flew back to the hours of her wonderful, fearful happiness. "Once you have been happy: a good and glorious man has loved you once. Oh, yes, how he loved, how his eyes used to shine, how his words glowed. What agony parting was to him: no, nothing in the world can blot that out of my life." She began to go through the different scenes in her mind: the beginning in the lane . . . and so sat thinking and dreaming. She lost all sense of reality, and fell into a kind of waking sleep. The heath spread out dark and wide, and beyond and below the grey darkness of the land stretched out to meet the sea. Across the heath, from the wide, boundless distance, came a wondrous being, like a bright-coloured, heavy cow, with beautiful curling horns and monstrous ears, and huge, moist shining eyes. It stood before her and looked thoughtfully at her. And she dreamed she was walking along the lane, and lost her clothes, one after another, till she was quite naked; and her three friends stood there weeping to see her in such a state. Then from a side road came the mayor, whom she hated since she was a child, because he always looked at her as much as to say: "The teacher's widow's poor daughter." And with him came the man she had rebuffed, and they looked at her and laughed, and their laughter terrified her so that she fell down and lay as one dead. Then — it was no longer in the lane, but on the high road outside the town — the town scavenger, Jochen Wenig, came from another side road to carry her off into his hut. In her horror she cried out, and awoke.

Looking round her in terror she began confusedly to repeat prayers and texts which she had learnt at school; and got up stiffly to her feet.

A man came towards her, groaning and breathing heavily, and said in a loud voice: "Who's here? What's the matter?"

Who's worrying herself in this way? You — is it you, my child?"

"Yes, it's me, Uncle Wedderkop," said Anna.

"My child," he said, his voice suddenly becoming quite soft and sympathetic; "why are you crying in this piteous way? Has anyone hurt you in any way? Come — come, let's go away together. Only don't cry so — don't cry."

"I am so fearfully lonely," she cried, sobbing pitiably, "so fearfully deserted."

For a time he walked by her side in silence. Then he said, "Convention is the cause of your suffering. Conventional respectability is a murderer: it is destroying your youth and the youth of many of your sisters. Think — if we lived under natural conditions you would, from your childhood up, always have been surrounded by young people of the other sex; one would have been your friend, another would have honoured you from a distance, a third would have played happily with you. This sunny wind-swept height might have been the playground of the young people of Hilligenlei. Three or four or more, the best in all the country round, would have sued eagerly for your love from the time you were twenty, because of your beauty and your chastity, and, amid much wrangling and weeping, playing and kissing, you would have become a woman. And that's how it still is among the children of labourers and artisans. A labourer's child, if she is chaste and beautiful, has wooers enough. But, in the so-called educated classes, convention has perverted and destroyed what was naturally beautiful. Convention says to a young girl: 'You mustn't go for a walk alone with a young man; you mustn't call him by his Christian name; you mustn't kiss him unless you are going to marry him; you must have so-and-so much dowry.' And it says to the young man: 'You mustn't marry without money — your income is too small. You must expend the flower of your manhood on fallen women, and marry late. You will escape responsibility if you remain single.' And so, wherever the young men and women are, convention follows them like a cantankerous old aunt, robbing you girls of the best time of your lives, so that many never marry, and many don't marry till too late. Little one, you are not despised; no one despises you — you must never think that; only, like thousands of others, you are sacrificed to a cruel, pernicious convention.

What help is there? One individual cannot do much. You women must do it yourselves. One thing I say to you, my dear girl, and don't forget it: if you marry and are happy in your home, and in having someone to love and to care for, then do not forget your dear sisters sitting alone as you are now, longing for the fulfilment of their woman's destiny, a home to love, filled with children's tears and laughter. Work in some way to help the young women of our country."

Anna had listened attentively, and the kind words soothed her. The moon looked down peacefully over the silent world.

"Years ago," she said softly, "I did something that is considered a sin; but I loved him beyond everything. I cannot speak of it to anyone."

"Is it over now?"

"Yes, quite over; he is far away."

"Was he good to you?"

"Oh, so good," she said. "But he could not help me or himself . . . he could not be false to an old bond, and I could not be happy at the cost of someone else's misery."

"Nature is stronger than convention," he said. "Thank God for that; and love is mightier than death, for which thank Him too."

"God?" she said in a low sad tone; "when I was a child I remember being dreadfully distressed because I had left one person of the Trinity out of my evening prayers . . . now the Trinity means nothing to me — nothing. I have no faith, and that is sad."

"Yes," said he, reflectively, "it is sad. But I cannot help you there. I have none either. I also have no *Hilligenlei*, no Holyland for my soul. I cannot accept the faith of the Church or find another of my own."

She drew a deep breath and said:

"You have done me good, Uncle Wedderkop. I have longed so terribly, for such a long while, to hear a friendly word." Then she added hesitatingly, in a low voice: "But if I don't get married, I don't know what I shall do with my life."

He looked at her sideways, with rather a roguish expression, and said: "Come, Antje; you're only twenty-three; hasn't your mirror told you what you look like? It may be

a year, or two, or even three, but — the man will come, a fine, serious man, who wants you."

"No one dares to come near me," she said, breathing quick again.

He laughed. "No coward would venture; but it would be no good if he did. He will be a real man, and one who knows his own worth. That's why you have to wait so long."

The streets were quiet; the moonlight lay upon them cold and grey. "I will trust for a while then," she said.

"Yes," said he, "don't despair. Hope for Hilligenlei!"

CHAPTER XIV.

By autumn Pe Ontjes Lau was assured that his business was going to be a success. He gave up managing the smacks himself, extended his shed, and built a vane on the top, which, in spite of all his oiling, creaked unpleasantly all day long. As soon as the news reached the club they cried: "It will go wrong; it's sure to go wrong; such a thing is impossible in Hilligenlei."

But Pe Ontjes knew that he had now got a business that would make him happy and support a wife and children. So he lifted up his head, and went to look for Anna Boje. Up to now he had compelled his eyes to look at nothing but maize and barley sacks, or the keen-eyed farmers; now he lifted up his head and looked about him. And there is never any doubt or hesitation when Peter Ontjes Lau, formerly the magnificent mate of the *Gude Wife*, now corn-dealer, lifts his head. Well, he lifted his head with its short fair beard, and looked about him. Where is Anna Boje?

One misty evening in October her mother came into the kitchen and said, "First mate Lau passed a minute ago and knocked at the window to ask where you were; he had not seen you for a long time."

Anna looked up from her work, saying crossly: "What is Lau to me?"

"Child, what is the matter?" said her mother much troubled. "There is nothing wrong in it."

"He never troubled about me before. What does he want?"

But when she had washed up after supper a strange confusion of feelings drove her out into the dark evening. Curiosity, ardent and joyful desire, restless anger, all had share in it. She went out by the kitchen door along the lane up to the long house on the dyke. He followed her.

"Hallo, Anna Boje!" he said, with all his old serenity of

manner. "Well met! I was going up to the pierhead to see whether there are any signs of the smack."

She went with him, and he asked after Heinke and Hett. She said how glad his mother must be to have him in Hilligenlei, and how her mother longed to have Pete safe on shore. He inquired how she spent the day; she must have enough to do, now that her mother sat all day at the machine. She said that after the harvest festival she meant to look for a situation — in Hamburg, if possible. Such circumspect conversation occupied them until they had reached the pier, and turned back again. Then there came a silence.

"If you were agreeable —" he began — he tried, without success, to say it offhand, but the tone of his voice was quite changed — "if you were agreeable, I should like to take a walk like this another time with you. Will you?"

There was an apple in her throat; she said slowly, in a choking voice: "Why haven't you taken any notice of me all this time? You never came that time in Hamburg, either."

"That time in Hamburg I couldn't come. Afterwards I have always been thinking of the business. I am the sort of man that likes to feel the ground firm beneath his feet before doing anything new," he said with proud composure.

"Yes," said she angrily, "that's what you are, that's what you have always been . . . you have always thought an eel, or a rope, or a sack of maize more important than a living human being."

"That's not true," he said, in some anger; "you have no right to say that."

"If it were not so, you wouldn't have grudged me a friendly word in all this time."

"It's a pity," said he, "that you are so touchy — your own mother complains of it."

"I am not touchy," she said, angrily; "everybody is unjust in saying that — and you, of course, would be one. You were the first of all. When I was a tiny girl you were hard on me. *You* are proud; yes, you are. You always want to keep me down. You always want to show that you are somebody, you have something, and I am nobody and have nothing, and ought to be glad when the lord comes and drops me a word!"

He laughed in some annoyance, without quite knowing what

to say. She went a few steps further by his side, then hastening her pace disappeared into the darkness.

Reaching home she went straight up to her room and went to bed, working herself up into a state of ever increasing anger and despair. The west wind blew gently at the door and at the window, and she lay listening to it. Soon she rose, and with rapid fingers undid her yellow coils; then throwing herself wildly down again, she buried her head in the waves. "Oh, if he were to come! If he could see me now . . . and it tortured him. I know I am beautiful and — and I know I can make a man happy."

The west wind pressed softly against the door. Now not only the wind: the latch clicked.

"Anna," he said, calmly; "I would so gladly be friends with you. Anna . . . speak kindly."

She lay still, only moving her white shoulders a little. "What am I to say? I am proud, senselessly touchy — I don't even realize that I am a poor teacher's daughter, although everyone knows it."

"You are mad," he said, standing up; "there is no use talking to you."

He was gone.

When her mother came into the kitchen next morning, and saw her daughter's set, distorted face, she was troubled, and said: "Can you not get on with Pe Ontjes? He is such a fine good fellow. Oh, my child, my child! don't harden your heart. Afterwards it will break like glass and you will suffer when it is too late."

Anna roused herself from her gloomy dreams to say "Be silent; I can't bear it."

In the afternoon, when her mother was sitting alone at the machine Pe Ontjes came in and sat down beside her. "Aunt Boje, Anna and I are fond of one another; but we cannot manage to come to an agreement at all."

"Pe Ontjes," she said, "you know how glad I should be if you could. Don't be angry with her. You might have asked after her once all the time that you have been here; she has always been fond of you."

"Yes," he said, thoughtfully. Then he raised his head and said, "I don't think there's any way out of it except for us to be yoked together like two recalcitrant calves, so that we

are forced to talk things out, do you know, for six or ten hours together. You can't go on quarrelling all that time; you can talk things over properly then."

Hella Boje once more sadly shook her head. "I don't think we can do that," she said.

"I thought of taking the old smack to Cuxhaven myself this evening. I have sold it to a man there. She might come too."

Hella Boje once more sadly shook her head. "I don't think she will," she said.

"Well, then, I'll tell you what. Send her to the pier about nine this evening with a parcel of washing or something for Hett, or Pete—the *Gude Wife* comes into Hamburg this evening—will you?"

"I'll see what I can do," she said. "Go now; I'll do what I can."

Very fortunately Anna spent Monday in Friestadt with Anna Martens, her only friend, and confessed to her the whole of her intercourse with Mate Lau, secretly hoping to be scolded, in which she was not disappointed.

Anna Marten had said, "I have three things to say to you, Anna. Firstly, if he wants you for his wife he can't think very ill of your character. Secondly, you *are* proud and touchy, Anna. Thirdly, if you do not come to an understanding with him you will turn to ice, for you love him terribly." Therefore when Anna came home, after supper, about eight o'clock, her mind had been illuminated by this very plain speaking on the part of Anna Martens.

Her mother said, "Pe Ontjes Lau has been here, dear. He's sailing for Cuxhaven in the smack about nine, and offered to take anything I had for the boys. I have wrapped up some cakes for Hett, he's so fond of them—and Pe Ontjes said it would be best if you would take the parcel aboard yourself. I expect he would like to take you to Cuxhaven."

She said no more, but shut the door softly thinking, "Now she must do as she pleases; may God help her!"

Anna went up to her room, sat down on the edge of her bed, and drew a deep breath. "I will go with him. I will go with him. Oh, how glad I am that he is not angry! how glad. If he is good to me I shall be unspeakably glad; so glad that he will wonder at me. But if I see that we cannot manage it,

then there is nothing in the world for me." She got up, looked about her, and thought, "I will wash."

She fetched the shallow wooden tub that leant against the wall outside into her room, and poured three pailfuls of water into it; shut the door, drew down the blind, and, taking off all her clothes, knelt down in front of the tub and began to wash herself with a serious face. As she washed her neck and her beautiful shoulders she thought "The mud stuck there which they threw at me under his eyes on the sandbank. I was a child then. What has become of my shoulders and of my soul since then? Will he put his arms round — the big horrid boy."

She washed her plump white arms, thinking "Would you rather play with the waves or with Pe Ontjes Lau? Oh, Pe Ontjes Lau — rather!"

A faint smile crossed her face as she wondered what he would be like, whether he would keep that serene calm, that cool condescension of manner — a smile like the passage of a light cloud above a dark pinewood, lighting up its dark recesses. She washed her beautiful soft body, without a mark or a crease, for it had never been tightly laced. "No one has seen my body since the last time my mother bathed me. I have always bathed alone since at the edge of the meadow. No one has seen it — no one. Whom does it concern? Does it concern Pe Ontjes Lau? I am not answerable to anyone for what I do with my body — I am free, full grown. Have I ever debased it? ever made it unclean? ever done anything impure or unnatural? No; I have nothing to reproach myself with."

She washed her beautiful straight legs down to the knees, looking thoughtfully at a white scar on the inside curve above the knee. Once, when she was between twelve and thirteen, she had had a childish passion for a merry, good-looking young fellow on neighbour Marten's farm, and when he was working with the horses in the field she used to make him get off and mount her straddle-legs on the horse. One day, at the time of the wheat harvest, the four-year-old mare on which she was mounted refused to pull; a thunder-storm was threatening, and the man in angry impatience tried to strike at it with his pitchfork. As he was in the act, however, the mare swerved, and one prong of the fork went right into the child's leg through her clothes. Terrified he examined the place, staunched

the blood with his lips, and fetched water from the ditch, shaking his head and saying "Poor little pet, poor little pet." When her mother discovered the bloodstains on her garments, and inquired after the cause, she said she had fallen on a nail, so as not to betray him. Something of the old feeling came back as she looked at the scar and thought, "I have never told anyone that little tale; how lovely to have a good man as a real friend." Her face softened and her eyes shone. "How lovely to be close to him and show him the scar; and he will stroke it and laugh, and tease me — how wonderful!" Last of all she washed her feet, finely set on slender ankles, neither too large nor too small. "When I was a child they ran far out into the shallows, sometimes we would stop and look at the print they made, every toe and every curve so clearly marked in the soft sand. Yes, then you ran off on all sorts of childish pleasures, away from Pe Ontjes; now you are running back to him — poor runners; you've got to do what I want!" Again she laughed softly, and a wave of blood overspread her face. "Don't tell . . . but I want to run to Pe Ontjes. Oh, I think I am too happy." She went and knelt down in front of the chest of drawers singing softly; out of tune — for none of the Bojes could sing — but it pleased her. First of all she took out and put on a soft woollen chemise, then the linen one from the very bottom of the drawer. Three years ago, when she was twenty-one, her mother had made it of fine linen with her own hands, and made a delicate edging of lace round the neck. She had not said a word about it, but one day when Anna was arranging her chest she found it, and knowing at once for what her mother had intended it, she had put it away right at the bottom and not said a word about it. Now she took it and put it on while she knelt, buttoning it on the left shoulder, and smoothing it down in front. Then she did her hair. First she unpinning and uncoiled it, and let it fall so that it shone like a golden thatch; then combed and plaited it, glancing from time to time in the mirror, regarding the work of her hands with that mixture of doubt and satisfaction with which the female fox watches its children at play in the morning. She coiled the plaits round back of her head, drew her hair a little down over her temples in front, and nodded her head twice, "Ready." Then she drew on her tight-fitting bodice of white linen, and buttoned on to it two pairs of

knickerbockers, one of thin white cotton, the other of soft, warm wool — it being November, and cold — and over all her dress — the only pretty one she possessed — blue, quite plain, except for a slight fulness in front, and made in one piece with a belt at the waist. It was so loose that when she raised her shoulders she lifted all her garments. Next she put on her hat, a fairly large, brown felt with a wavy brim, prettily trimmed with brown velvet ribbon, and her loose, grey jacket. Then, last of all she took down the big cloak which Anna Martens had left hanging in her room. It really belonged to her husband, but Anna wore it sometimes when she drove to Hilligenlei in cold or wet weather. Anna put it on now, smiling. "Well, Anna Martens, when I come back you can ask your coat to tell you its experiences."

She stood at the door, in her vigorous beauty, to look back once. Then, going down, took the parcel from the table, and calling out in the passage "I'm off!" went out.

When she came to the pier, there in the darkness stood a tallish man in seafaring clothes with oilskins over his arm, waiting. Thinking he was Pe Ontjes, she cried out from afar off, "I am bringing the parcel." But it was Kai Jans. "Where have *you* sprung from?" said she.

"From Berlin," he said. "I came yesterday. I am going to sail to Cuxhaven with my old mate Pe Ontjes. What else am I to do with the time?"

"Well," said she, "you can take this parcel for Hett. He is in Hamburg now."

He shrugged his shoulders and said, like a spoiled child, "I don't like that. You must do it yourself. Come, I'll bring you on board."

"You'll bring me back immediately?"

"Of course," he said, taking hold of the oars. "What do you suppose? I am no buccaneer, like Wieben Peters."

It made her happy to know that these two big men made much of her, and told such quaint lies for her sake. She said, "You wrote to Heinke that you were not working very hard in Berlin. And you're not a student. What do you do, then?"

"I devour life."

"What do you mean?" she said jestingly.

"For the last three years I've put away all my brooding.

I live and see. It's a huge thing, don't you know, to have come from the narrow life on the ship, from the stuffy books in Hilligenlei, out into the big, bright, moving world! My eyes go like saucers."

"And work?"

"Oh!" he said. "I haven't done very much yet, but when once I do begin it will go all right. I shall pass my examination, never fear, when the time comes. I should do that for the old man's sake, anyhow," he continued in a more serious tone.

"I don't know," she said, "but it seems to me you're not the right kind of a person to be a clergyman. You're much too light-headed and cheerful for it."

"You don't understand, child. It is just cheerful people that are wanted now."

"By whom?"

"By God."

"Oh, how you talk!"

"Never mind. Give me your hand. The great mate isn't there yet."

At that moment, however, he came aft. She drew back the hand she had given to Kai Jans and said in her clear voice, "Will you both promise to be good and polite to me, because then I will come to Cuxhaven with you."

"Girl," cried Pe Ontjes Lau, "come here quickly. Bo'sun, up with the mainsail."

Kai Jans went quickly forward.

"Anna," said Pe Ontjes in a low voice, "this is sweet of you! Put on your coat, now. It's cold enough, and raining into the bargain. Are you warmly clad? I've brought mother's wrapper with me." He fastened the coat in front for her, and, taking her by both arms, pushed her down into a seat by the rudder. "So! Sit there and hold the rudder for a moment."

He went to Kai and the boy, and they soon got up the sails. The boat sailed slowly down stream. Then he came back, Kai Jans remaining forward with the boy.

"The *Gude Wife* is signalled," he said, taking hold of the tiller. "She comes into the Elbe to-day or to-morrow."

"Oh! how lovely!" she said. "Perhaps I can meet him and go home with him."

"And me!" said he.

"Yes," she said, not unkindly, though her lips trembled, "if you care to go with a person like me."

He laid his hand quickly upon her two, which lay in her lap, pressed them and let them go. "I have told father to let your mother know about the *Gude Wife* this evening."

"That is nice of you — very."

"Tell me, is Heinke like you in character as well? She is like you to look at, except that her hair and eyes are rather darker — a pretty, slender girl. She writes to Kai Jans — beginning early."

"It's only play," said she. "Kai is always so much interested in individuals — that's what it is. She is a clever girl, that's why he likes her. By the bye, I don't think your boat-swain works very hard."

"Oh! that doesn't matter. You're rather worried about Hett, aren't you?"

"Oh, no!" she said, calmly. "He is getting on well."

They were all worried about Hett — mother, Anna, Pete, even Heinke; but the Bojes were far too proud to confess as much to others, even to the great Pe Ontjes.

"Well," he said quickly, "one would expect that. The boy ought to be decent, with such parents and such brothers and sisters! You're all magnificent, but the best and most beautiful of all the Boje children is the eldest."

She was silent.

He went on, hesitatingly, "If we come to Pe Ontjes, he considers himself a good, honest fellow, take it all in all, but he thinks he could be far better, far cleverer, far more useful if he had you for his wife — that's how it is."

"Pe Ontjes!" she said with breathless agitation. "I want nothing in the world so much as that you should be good to me."

"Then hand over your heart," he said aloud, seizing her hands stretched out to take his.

"I love you," she said; "you must know that."

"Thank God for that," he said, holding her hands tight.

"But, Pe Ontjes, we are so poor!"

"Oh, yes," he said. "I am marrying your tables and chairs, I suppose! Woman, I want your courage and your shining eyes. To-day I bought Bartel's house. It isn't big, but it is

snug and comfortable, and then we can live together. My mother will provide a table, your mother a bed — so there! Oh, to think of living with you!"

"When I love anyone," she said softly, "then I love him, oh! fearfully much. I think only of him and what concerns him, and care nothing for the whole wide world beyond." Raising her eyes, she looked at him. "I have loved you for a long while," she said.

"And I you, Anna," said he, putting his free arm round her neck.

"Kai Jans will see —"

"No! He said . . . he would sit behind the mainsail until I called him. Kai, come here."

Kai Jans stepped down from the poop.

"Kai, we are engaged. The wedding will be in six weeks at most."

"Oh!" said Kai, "I am glad. Now we shall have a delightful voyage." He shook hands with Anna. "Yes; I am very glad, believe me." He was thinking of an evening in May three years ago.

"Thank you, Kai."

"We have passed the sandbank." He pointed to a dark line to the north. "Do you remember, Anna, you called him the eel-eater? And now — tastes change!"

"Good Heavens!" she said. "I never thought of that. No," she said, with a low laugh, "I can never kiss you!" She pressed his hand hard.

They glided past the lightship. A brief word was exchanged across the night. When its light had disappeared behind them they saw the Heligoland light in front of them. They flew over the sea, the swell driving them gradually further and further out into the open.

"Now we are going from Holyland to Holyland," said Kai Jans. "It's the same word, Heligoland and Hilligenlei."

He was going forward again, but she said, "Stay with us, Kai."

"I shall only be in the way, child," he said thoughtfully.

"Not at all. Come and sit down by us. There is nothing to do till you get to Heligoland. If you don't want to sleep, come and talk to us."

"For a little while, then," said he, sitting down beside Anna

and spreading out his oilskin so that the wind could not blow between them. Then he was silent.

"Well," said Pe Ontjes.

"Well," said Kai, "I don't know. I can only talk of things which seem to me important."

"Talk of them, then," said Anna. "Your examination, I suppose?"

He laughed. "No!" he said. "Wieben Peters."

"Is the story of Wieben Peters important?" said Pe Ontjes.

"We all know that story — every child in Hilligenlei knows it," said Anna.

"No," said he, "no one knows it. You can't think how I have thought and thought about it, to find the truth."

"Tell it us, then," said Pe Ontjes.

CHAPTER XV.

THE light south-south-westerly wind filled the sails; the fine rain fell slanting on the deck; the water rushed, swishing round the ship; the Heligoland light burned clear in the grey, starless night.

"About four hundred years ago Wieben Peters, of Ditmarsch, made the same voyage that we are making now — not in peace as we three, but in burning anger because he thought that his people had put him in the wrong where he was right. This was the case. But the real cause of the dissension lay in the fact that his was a despotic nature, for whom the little farming state had no place. There they were all masters, all equally great. 'What a despotic eye he has! Look! he walks as if he were Count Rantzau at least! How sharply his words ring out! I say, where did he get a coat of that cut? Just look at his long, yellow beard! Let's annoy him!' He ended by roaring like a bull.

"He went to sea with fifteen wild, turbulent fellows on board. The beach was lit up by the flaming houses of his opponents. The people shouted imprecations after the enemy of his country.

"At that time Heligoland was inhabited by a miserable race — the degenerate lees of the brave people that had crossed the sea to England. They lived on the scanty herrings they caught, and on rough nights they would light a fire on the tower in the hope that some ship might run aground on the sands or against the cliffs. In this they were seldom gratified, although the parson, at whose feet they sat to a man every Sunday, and whose ministrations were reserved for them, prayed fervently that God would bless their shores with wreckage.

"When Wieben Peters ran into their bay with a fresh south-easter and on to the beach, they ran away and hid in the gorges and declivities of the lower part of the island, leaving Wieben Peters with his fifteen followers master of Heligoland.

"He dwelt in the mighty old tower built by the earlier, valiant inhabitants, and went down and levied contributions from his native land. Every time he sallied forth either a Ditmarsh cutter laden with gun-metal from Hamburg was raided or a farm set on fire. On his return he would rejoice, laugh to himself, and play with his long beard, tying knots in it and then untying them. He fed his soul on fierce hatred, and pretended that he was satisfied and content; but he suffered sore.

"One day he went north with six men on board for the sheer joy of sailing, till he came to the Bergen heights, and there he sailed up to see whether there were any ships from Ditmarsh lying there. He inquired up and down the German quay. There was not one. Then, in an ill-humour, he went into one of the warehouses to buy provisions for the return.

"Now, in this foreign country the German merchants lived in their warehouses on the quay. All the time they were closely watched and made to feel that their position was not that of masters, but of tolerated guests. For example, they were not allowed to have their wives with them — a prohibition which they evaded by cutting holes in the wall into which their beds were built, and admitting the wives, who dwelt in the town, at nights.

"It was dark when Wieben Peters entered the Hamburg merchant's room, and, not finding him there, he walked up and down, thinking. While he was doing so the little door behind the bed opened and the Hamburger's wife crept in. Still on her knees, she saw a strange man, and followed him with her eyes. He gave one rapid glance in her direction and then paid her no further attention, but began to play with his beard. Now, although the day was already far advanced, one long ray of bright sunshine shone right across the dark little room, striking it at about the height of a man's head, and this flickering, belated light played upon his beard from time to time. The beard was so yellow that it seemed to cast off a reflected light of its own, which played over the kneeling woman's face like so many little sprites warming their feet on her glowing eyes and cheeks.

"At last the woman said in a slow, difficult voice, 'How many knots can you tie in your beard?'

"He loosened the knife that hung in his belt and said, going up to the bed, 'How many can you make?'

"Raising herself a little on her knees, she plunged both her hands in his beard and began playing with it, then looked up at him with an embarrassed laugh. Letting her hands sink, she murmured, 'Ah! you — you are a man!'

"'Where is the Hamburger?' said he.

"'Oh, the shell-fish!' said she, letting her hands slip down his body and then hold him fast. She loved him so.

"Then he cried wildly, breathing hard, 'Come to the end of the quay to-night. I will wait for you.'

"So that very night she ran away from the Hamburg merchant, leapt on board ship, and sailed with him to Heligoland.

"Winter came; the wild west wind tore and raged round the island, and the love which his great, passionate heart lavished on the woman was as strong and unruly as the wind. Summer came: gentle winds breathed soft and low round the ruddy cliffs; and the love of his great, deep heart for the woman was as gentle and tender as the breeze.

"So he lived, summer and winter, for four years. Now and then he sailed away, and those who stayed behind would see the vivid glow of fire shining in the eastern sky, over from Ditmarsh. Verily his native land paid the penalty of its sins! When he returned he would go up to her bed and rejoice as he gazed upon her, tying and untying knots in his long beard the while.

"So he fed his heart on passionate love, and pretended that he was satisfied and content. But often he would stand, looking with sombre eyes across to Ditmarsh, and suffering sore.

"When he returned one day with his companions from Ditmarsh, after having lightened the load of a cutter at Brunsbüttel, and emptied two farmyards, the little parson, who still lived with the wretched remnant of the people living under the cliffs, happened to slink past, and, as usual, some of the men, having no respect for the Church or its gifts, began to throw dead fish at the stout little man's head. Wieben Peters stopped them sharply and severely. A priest was not a fit subject for mockery, he said.

"They looked at one another in astonishment.

"The next Sunday the little priest clambered up to the

heights to hold a service for the wild horde there. Wieben Peters and the woman from Bergen and his children by her, the men and the women they had with them, sat at the lee side of the tower, shyly imitating Wieben Peters' actions, folding their hard hands when he did, murmuring the prayers they could not comprehend. When the service was at an end they stepped aside and said to one another between their teeth, in toneless voices and without moving their lips, 'He'll go down hill now. He's become holy. It's all up!'

"Nevertheless they made some raids of the good old sort over to Ditmarsh and brought rich booty home, and so things went on for a time.

"But one day Wieben Peters took the parson aside, and, looking at him as if he wanted to penetrate behind his eyes to the inside of his head, said, 'It isn't enough. You must know what more I must do.'

"At first the priest was terrified, but then he gave the accursed counsel, 'Give half the gold and silver you have stolen to the cathedral in Hamburg—that will bring you peace.'

"So it was done. Again they made a raid to Ditmarsh and brought rich booty home, and things went on smoothly for a time. Yet he was not cheerful. He felt no inclination to play with his beard and tie knots in it. So a few months later he again took the priest aside and said to him what he had said before. The parson went down to the lower part of the island and sat a whole day pondering in the rotten old boat in which he dwelt. He could not understand a man of this sort. Then he went up again, shaking his head and groaning, and this time he had to give the real answer. 'You must give up all that you possess and earn your bread by the work of your hands, live a pure, sinless life, begging God for forgiveness of your transgressions.'

"And it had to be done. All their goods were secretly despatched to Ditmarsh. The women were married or dismissed. There were to be no hard deeds, no rough words, no raids over the sea. Every man was to fish all day long. Morning and evening fervent prayer, 'God have mercy, Lord have mercy.' That was the order of the day.

"Next night the best of his comrades filled the best cutter with the best treasures, and were for sailing away. But the woman intervened, and begged them to stand by him. She

would see that their goods were not sent away at once. They remained.

"Some, it must be admitted, did really come to God. Into their eyes there came an expression at once serious and beautiful. From morning to night they were eager to help others, and their laughter was like the innocent laughter of a child. Most of them, however, hung round the walls of the tower in gloomy silence, staring dully across the sea.

"And Wieben? No! he did not come to God. He went about with a dark look on his face, staring eastwards, towards Ditmarsh. There was no deep, beautiful expression in his eyes. He suffered sore.

"Then the woman saw the only way to help him — the way she had long foreseen. She loved him as passionately as on that first evening when she knelt on the Hamburg merchant's bed. She loved him with the whole force and intensity of her nature — with a love that thought only of him and nothing of self. Therefore she sent a trusty messenger over to Ditmarsh to say, 'Wieben Peters is going mad because you do not come! Come!'

"Thirty men of the best families took counsel together, stocked a boat with beer and bacon enough, and sailed for the island with a favourable breeze.

"As so often Wieben Peters stood on the tower with his wife by his side, gazing eastwards, and he saw the boat and all the men beneath the two big sails, and recognised the Ditmarsh standard aloft. Then he rejoiced — rejoiced so that his eyes shone with joy. And his joy grew as he recognised the men, one by one, and saw that they belonged to the best families. He laughed, and began to knot his beard. Three knots in each strand, says the chronicle. Then he sent his wife and children and all the other women to the extreme end of the cliff, where he had built them a shelter, and armed himself for defence.

"His aim was to prevent the men from Ditmarsh from climbing into the upper part of the island, but the wretched folk below showed them a secret way, and he with his twenty companions had to retire to the tower. Three or four of the assailants fell. The others drove in the door, killed some, and took the rest prisoners. Wieben Peters himself sped alone up the staircase, shutting the trap door behind him. With the

great bows they shot from below through the planks till all was quiet overhead and blood dripped down.

"Then they went up the steps, but no one was anxious to go forward, thinking that the first man to put his head through the trap door would get a blow that would last him all his life. At last Watt, of Dreisprung, a great, tall fellow — his long-legged descendants are all over the countryside to-day — plucked up courage and opened the door.

"There, on his back, lay Wieben Peters, stretched out all his length, gasping heavily. 'Come on!' he said, looking at them in turn as they came through the trap door with eyes from which even imminent death had not chased the joyful interest, whispering the name and family of each. They stayed by with him all evening. Most of them, indeed, sat below, round the beer cask, but all the time some sat upstairs with him, each relating to him what had happened in his family and in the other important families, the deaths and births, the quarrels, the feasts, the marriages, he listening greedily with unblinking eyes, greedy of looking into their faces.

"And they had much to ask him in their turn. They wanted details of this raid and that, rejoicing in his success, and saying, 'You were a thorn in our side! You're a great man.'

"His eyes laughed. 'Tell me,' he said softly; 'why did you not come before? I longed for you to come! It was scandalous the way you put up with everything! You're a set of mealbags!'

"'Don't you see, we decided to let you really get together a lot of booty, so as to make it worth while to come.'

"His eyes still laughed.

"'It was fearfully stupid of you,' they said, 'to let such a lot of good stuff go to the fat Hamburgers. You might have known we should come and fetch it back!'

"His eyes laughed more. Towards midnight they shouted up from below, 'Wieben, we've got hold of a parson. Do you want him?'

"He shook his head. 'Everything is in order,' he said.

"'So we think,' said they.

"So they talked and told stories and drank. When he could no longer take a share, and began to breathe hard and rattle in his throat, they all went below and drank, one coming up from time to time to see how he did. When the morning rose

across the sea, to the east, above his native land, grey at first and pale as a new-born babe, then, gradually growing bright and laughing, he died.

"The woman from Bergen, who came from Friesland by birth, remained upon the island, cast the parson and his wretched folk into the sea, and brought up her tall children — a new race to people the land, brave and strong and prudent. All the people with curious names on the island, Hunken, Haien, etc., are descended from her. Their faces look as if they had been carved by a rather unskilful carpenter driven mad by this evil world."

The wind had got up, and the rain fell more steadily; the light shone clear to the right of the mainsail, gleaming high and wide over the sounding darkness.

"Yes," said Kai Jans; "the parson's last counsel was right. One must renounce all, suffer all, live a pure life in poverty. Only so can one come before God pure as a child. It says so plainly in the Sermon on the Mount. But he could not do it. And I — I can't do it, either. I hardly believe that the Saviour Himself could. Why? There is something in human nature, and something good, too, that fights against it. That kind of holiness of life is worthless. There is something wrong in it."

"So," said Anna, "that's what you brood about in Berlin — Wieben Peters, and that sort of thing!"

"Oh," he said, "you're not to imagine that I'm a dreamer — a sentimentalist! I am looking on at life there."

"Especially the girls!" said Anna.

"It's almost dangerous to confess as much, but I do not deny it. If I were to say I prize nothing so much as a good dinner, or I think nothing so important as a properly starched collar, I should be considered a person of sense; but if I say I don't think there is anything better than a pretty young girl, I am looked upon as a doubtful character. And yet, is there anything in nature so beautiful, so glorious? Do you know, Pe Ontjes, I go sometimes to the museum or the national gallery, and I'm happy enough there; but I can tell you if I see a pretty graceful girl standing in front of one of the pictures everything on the walls and round about is nothing to me in comparison."

"I quite agree with you," said Pe Ontjes, "and I am sure Anna has nothing to say against it. What else do you find interesting in Berlin?"

"Oh! the streets, the crowd, the buildings, the soldiers, the theatre; but far the most of all, people — individuals."

"How do you mean?" said Pe Ontjes.

"Well, I cannot help watching them, to try to find out how they live and what they think about. I can walk up and down the streets for hours — not only Unter den Linden, but in the north, where I live — thinking about the people I see, picturing their past to myself, and their way of life and their feelings. I know ever so many of the workmen's families among whom I live — the men and their wives and children too."

"So that's how you occupy yourself," said Anna, "with girls in picture galleries, and people on the street, and workmen's families! You went to Berlin for rather a different purpose, you must admit. Honestly now — one must confess it."

"You mean, to study theology," said Kai, looking thoughtfully out to sea. "Well, I do study theology, and I shall pass my examination soon, when the time comes, and creditably enough, too. But I will tell you something that is rather strange. Mark, Anna. You know our people are more and more falling away from the old belief. Science is undermining Catholicism and Protestantism alike. Something new must, and will, come. The question is, am I not doing right in getting to know what men are nowadays? Think! The alderman has no religion, or one not worth calling by that name. No more has the baker's boy. And certainly the workman's wife has none at all. You would be right to blame me if I were simply lounging about Berlin out of idleness or *ennui*; but what I do is to stand in the stream of humanity, listening to its roar, hearing in that roar the old question, 'Whence came ye, whither go ye, children of men?' And I can hear this question more clearly, more profoundly than other men. I am more troubled by it than other men."

"Yes," said Anna, "I see. That's the cause of it all. Three and a half years ago, at the restaurant, you gave it all up. Now you have begun again to look for *Hilligenlei*."

"Well, suppose I have; what have you to say against it?"

"Nothing at all!" they cried earnestly. "Nothing. Seek on."

"Now, Anna," said Pe Ontjes, "you must go to the cabin."

Come, I'll show you the sleeping accommodation. We must reef up afterwards, Kai."

"Don't be too long," said Kai. "The wind is veering to the west, and there is more swell on. We may have a bad time yet."

When they came into the cramped little room he struck a light and then sat down on the locker, saying, "Well, is there perfect peace between us now? Come here!"

He drew her on to his knee. She played shyly with the lapels of his coat, looking up at him with a clear, affectionate gaze and saying with a deep thrill in her voice, "How sweet it is to have someone belonging to one!"

Lost in happy wonder, he feasted his eyes on her beauty and her gentleness, lifting his free hand slowly to stroke her fair hair, again and again, in tender silence. Then gradually he drew her close and closer to him.

"Your breath is so sweet, like the morning wind," he said.

"Of course, you silly boy, when one is young and clean!"

"And your lips taste of salt."

"And yours too — that's the sea wind," she said.

"Oh! your beautiful eyes! how they shine! and your breath is sweet — dear little girl!"

"You are so dear to me," she said in a difficult voice.

"Darling, I never dreamed you were so passionate. Oh! darling!"

"Oh! do you mind?" she cried in a strangled voice. "I can't help it! I am like that!"

"You dear, darling baby! Don't you know I would throw you overboard if you weren't like that!" He drew her closer to him and kissed her.

"Oh! Pe Ontjes!" said she softly, hiding her face in his shoulder. "Your yellow beard! how I love it! If you had been a shellfish, a solitary, ah! what a wretched look-out had that been for me! Oh! dear, dear one!"

He laughed and drew her to him again. "You dare to talk to me of shellfish!" he said. "There! now I must go up and you to sleep."

"Oh! stay a little. You must show me how to arrange here. I will only take off my dress and lie down." She did so, laughing. "There — there is a good deal of swell, but I shall go to sleep. Stay just a little with me. Oh! what a lovely day

to-morrow will be, Pe! I'm not grateful — you mustn't imagine that I am. I am worth as much as you are. But I am happy through you, and I think you are happy through me. . . . Suppose we meet Pete in the morning? How glad mother will be! She has not had much to be glad about in the last few years. And your parents — they will be glad, too, I know, although I have no money. And we shall live in Reimer's house?"

They began to talk about the house, and could not enough discuss how it should be arranged, and they live in it, holding one another's hands the while, with their eyes gazing into one another's faces by the dim light of the lamp.

"I really must go on deck now, and you must go to sleep," said he. He took her in his arms and kissed her. It was bliss to be in his arms.

"I wonder so that you are so dear to me!" she said. "I have always thought about it. I was afraid you could only care for a sack of maize or the *Gude Wife*."

"Dear, I am like other men — no different. To have the one you love in your arms, and know she loves you — that sets a man on fire!" He kissed her passionately. "I never want to leave you."

She embraced him, saying, "Oh, Pe Ontjes, I love you terribly much, and I would go through fire for anyone I love. But, Pe Ontjes — I must always, always be able to be proud of you."

Their passion was ready to leap into flame again, but all at once the vessel began to roll heavily from side to side, and he had to leave her to go on deck.

When he looked about him he saw Kai Jans and the boy at work on the sails. The light was high above them in the sky, to the starboard side, the wind had grown stronger and veered to the west. The heavy swell tossed the light vessel from side to side. With Pe Ontjes' aid they got her safely before the wind.

"There!" said Kai, sitting down at the helm beside Pe. "We shall be in Cuxhaven in five hours, sha'n't we?"

"With luck," said Pe Ontjes, looking to the south-west.

"The storm is abating."

They sat side by side, saying little, the wind driving between them. Squalls of driving rain came on, getting more violent

as the morning broke. They watched until the grey of dawn, their lives in their hands.

Just as day was breaking and the vessel had come through a violent squall, Anna Boje appeared at the hatchway, red with sleep, looking anxiously about her. "Oh! I have slept so sound," she said. "I don't know how I could. The noise just now waked me up." They did not catch what she said, but Kai sprang to his feet, helped her up, shut down the hatchway, and led her to the helm.

"She will get wet through," said Pe.

"I don't mind so long as I am with you both."

They wrapped her up in an old wet oilskin, and she sat still, rather cramped, looking with her direct, serious gaze over the dawning sky and the sea as it came roaring past from the far distance in long lines of mountainous white surf.

"Do you see that light?" said Pe. "That's Neuwerk, and the next is Cuxhaven."

When they passed their old love two hours later the signal ran outside the pilot house, "Storm from the S. W., turning to the right." That was about nine o'clock.

Three hours later, about twelve o'clock, the Grimmershörn cannons thundered over the roaring sea. The storm had turned to the north-west. It was a wild, dark November day.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was on this same fearful, grey day in November that the beautiful Bremen three-mast barque, coming from Iquique with a cargo of saltpetre, failed to hold her course outside Texel, and was driven on to the breakers, where she lay for six hours with the mad, white seadogs leaping round her. Thousands of them leapt up, barking and roaring, only to fall back again. Thousands bit at her sides, howling. Thousands more gnawed among the sand at her hold, and it was they who caused her death. She sank deeper, deeper, ever deeper in. The men tried to leave the ship—ten in one boat, ten in the other. One boatload made its way safely through the surf; the other, sucked back irresistibly, was washed against the walls of the ship and smashed. Nothing more was seen of the boat, nothing more of its crew. The white dogs howled all night long.

It was on this same fearful grey day that the twelve Finkenwårder fishing-boats were torn from their moorings and driven south of Heligoland. On that very morning the passengers on board the *Deutschland* had admired them as they stood out to the north, their beautiful brown sails defined against the dark grey of the sea and the blue-grey of the sky behind. In the blue-grey that covered the whole span of the heavens there stood great white sails, stretched out, upright, reaching from the earth to the highest arch of heaven, set for the world to sail with. About ten o'clock a heavy cloud rose, low down, on the sea, that came on swiftly, blindly, like some huge grey owl—pale-yellow flecks, like the yellow-whites of evil, ancient eyes. It came on, the white spray spattering it.

They looked up from their work, and now they hastened indeed. How they flew with their brown wings, the little seagulls, so close to the grey, foaming waters! Bend now, little ones; the great, old sea bird is just above you. Listen to the rustle of his mighty wings. He comes!

They drew in their wings. They bent down. He smote

as the morning broke. They watched until the grey of dawn, their lives in their hands.

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CHAPTER XVI

It was on this same fearful day that a beautiful Bremen three-masted schooner, carrying three hundred and fifty tons of cargo of saltpetre, failed to find her way home and was driven on to the breakers where she was crushed with the mad, white sea, leaving nothing but a mass of them leapt up, barking and racing with the ship. Thousands bit at her sides, howling. Thousands ran round among the sand at her head, and it was they who found her death. She sank deeper, deeper, ever deeper, and the boatload made its way safely through the sea to the other side back irresistibly, was washed against the wall of the ship and smashed. Nothing more was seen of the ship, nothing more of its crew. The white dogs howled all night long.

It was on this same fearful day that the three hundred and thirty fishing-boats were seen from their masts and rigging south of Heligoland. On this very morning the *Deutschland* had advanced from the north, their beautiful brown sails defining against the dark grey of the sea and the blue-grey of the sky. In the blue-grey that covered the whole space of the sky stood great white sails, stretched out and reaching from the earth to the high arch of heaven. About ten miles from the shore the sails came on. The boats were small, and they were close together, and they were all moving in the same direction. They were all moving towards the south, and they were all moving with the same speed. They were all moving with the same purpose, and they were all moving with the same fate. They were all moving towards the south, and they were all moving with the same speed. They were all moving with the same purpose, and they were all moving with the same fate.

twice, below, with a wild onset. Four beautiful brown wings floated on the waves.

It was a dark, grey November day. The last clear patch had disappeared by midday. The sea was a tortured mass of grey-green water, the air above torn by the howling winds, crossed by icy rain and snow. The squalls followed faster and faster on each other's heels.

Six torpedo boats, long and black, with their curved decks of steel, struggled to fight their way through the wildly rolling sea to the mouth of the Elbe. It was of the first necessity that they should reach it before the powerful ebb tide turned the surf against them. On the first boat stood the commander, the funnel behind him, the low conning tower castle in front, clad in his shabby, yellow oilskins, a stout English scarf round his neck, an ancient cap on his head, with storm flaps under his chin, his keen eyes following every motion of the sea. Beside him stood the first officer with his hand on the signal. Six men, in diving suits, held on to the railing, covered every now and then up to their knees by the white foam. About ten o'clock a man had let go of the railing on the neighbouring boat to let a comrade pass him. In less than the twinkling of an eye a wave had dashed over him and drawn him down. About eleven, just as the commander was bending down to give an order to the man at the wheel, a vast sea swept right over the first boat, striking her dead aft, and, lifting the hatches and the ship itself, cast her down again so that she yawed off. Then, indeed, what an impact! Head over heels, driven on like a dead fish, five men hanging to the bulwarks, five being madly dashed about by the waves, all fished out, however. Something like fishing, that! But six went to the bottom with the capsized boat.

There they lay in the hideous darkness, in the overturned boat, up to their shoulders in the water, driven hither and thither by the waves.

The young commander met his fate without a murmur. With calm courage he faced the loss of life and all that makes it precious—mother and brothers, the green of the woods, honour and renown among his fellows—satisfied to be giving his life for his country.

"Boys," he said to the others, "let us pray: 'Father, take

our souls to Thyself in Heaven, and grant us a quick and speedy death.' ”

He lies in peace in the cathedral at Schwerin, just as they found him in his ragged oilskins and long, rubber boots.

It was a dark, grey day, a morning of struggle and sorrow. All over the wide grey sea was there nothing to make glad the heart? Look! With what proud grace she comes on, bowing and rising before the wind, her sails furled to meet it, the waves surging over her knighthead! Look how she cleaves her distant way through cloud and rain and hail, over the wild, grey waters — the *Gude Wife*!

Last evening they had left the canal, the south-wester filling their sails, and about five in the morning, when they were above Texel, the second mate, Pete Boje of Hilligenlei, was about to steer an easterly course. But Jan Deeken came on deck, and, after snuffing the breeze, he went down below and actually came up again with his woollen cap!

Once more they all said, “He’s mistaken this time, thank Heaven! He’s mistaken!”

He stamped up and down between the taffrail and the helm with his hands in his pockets, looking up to spit now and then. Half an hour later he said in passing to Pete Boje, “Head her north, mate.” He nodded vaguely towards the north. Pete did as he was told, not without a secret shake of the head.

By ten o’clock a gale was blowing from the south-west with a tendency to turn north, which made it in the highest degree advisable to keep as far as possible from the confounded, Frisian shallows, and proved to the mate that the old man’s withered little nose had not yet begun to play him false. He pointed with his thumb to a sailing-vessel towards the north. “Did you see her, mate? That craft is the *Gude Man*!” The *Gude Man* was the *Gude Wife*’s brother, and belonged to the same firm. “Captain Winckel was once mate under me; but there was no confidence between us. He always knew best!” He looked at Pete from under his eyes.

“Seeing is better than believing, I think,” said Pete.

“That’s a sound rule on the whole,” said the captain.

An hour later the gale had turned to the north-west, and the two proud ships, not a mile distant from one another, rode side by side through the raging sea to Heligoland, their sails full to bursting; the wind whistling and howling in the rig-

ging, while squalls of wind and rain following one another in quick succession made it impossible to see far ahead.

An hour later, when it cleared up, the *Gude Wife* had ported her helm still more, and all her men were on deck. Soon afterwards the pilot-boat appeared, and first the *Gude Man* and then the *Gude Wife* took the pilot on board with considerable difficulty, the *Gude Wife* wearing round. A new squall arose, tearing wildly over the sea. The heavy hail beat and rattled on the deck. Heavy seas dashed amidship. The men were huddled together aft. The air was so thick with hail, so darkened by storm clouds that concealed the sun, that they could only see as far as where the foaming water was jumping up against the cabin. And so it went on for an hour. Then the sky cleared a little, and the storm abated, and they could look about them.

There lay the *Gude Man*, on her beam ends, all the forward rigging apparently broken down. Behind the dismembered vessel the cliffs of Heligoland were shadowed forth. The captain expectorated, his eyes fixed on her: "Keep up! That looks bad!" he said.

Slowly the *Gude Wife* came alongside. Every man was on the *qui vive*. Pete's eyes seemed ready to dart out of his head.

The captain handed him his binocular. "Look across!" he said.

"They've no captain," said Pete, "and no mate. They're short of men, captain!"

"It's lucky we're just by Heligoland," said the captain drily.

At that moment came a gust of wind. "Look! the sharks!" cried the first mate, as a number of close-reefed boats from Heligoland appeared to the left of the *Gude Man*.

Jan Deeken stared across with a muttered oath. The *Gude Wife* lay along the port side of the *Gude Man*. "Is there water enough, pilot?"

"All right, captain."

Pete Boje cast a rapid glance at the boat on the hatchway. "Captain?"

"I can't take the responsibility," said Deeken, shaking his head.

"Impossible," said the first mate, and the grey-bearded pilot shook his head.

Pete's eyes flew from the *Gude Man* to Deeken's rugged face and back. The *Gude Man's* deck was a mass of splintered yards and tangled rigging.

"Captain?" he almost screamed.

Deeken shook his head. "No good!"

Pete tore off his oilskins and his coat. "Captain, I—I must!" He struck his chest again and again.

"Why?" said the skipper, expectorating.

"I must!"

"Then do it, if you can't help," said the skipper sourly.

"Out with the boat! Who's coming with me?"

Deeken did not turn his head. "Back tops'ill!"

The boat was launched. In sprang Pete and two others. The men stood crowded together by the taffrail, a mass of glistening oilskins and sou'westers, to stare at the boat, bobbing up and down like a cork.

"Boy, boy, it is no good! Good Heavens! what a mad fellow! He is quite cracked! It's all right, though! she's still afloat. And there a Heligolander at the stern—he can help them!"

"They're a damned mad lot!"

"I say! look at the Heligolander! do you see?"

"He's got them!"

"There's one; the other two are gone—drowned."

Jan Deeken had not looked. When he heard what the men were saying he said in his dry voice, "East, south-east," his eyes fixed on the chart.

A quarter of an hour later, when Pete and the two Heligoland-ers climbed on to the deck of the *Gude Man*, a new squall, rising once more, covered the ship with the awful rush of hungry water.

The eldest of the sailors ran up to him. "The captain is deadly sick. The mate and four men are gone under."

"Is the helm all right?"

"Yes."

"Any leakage?"

"No."

"To the pumps!"

"Cargo?"

"Wool—washed away."

"I, mate of the *Gude Wife*, am in command."

The sailor came up to Pete. "Two feet of water in the well!"

"Pilot, make for the Elbe."

Up came Hunke Heine, or Heine Hunke, or whatever his name was, biting his lips till there was nothing of them to be seen, and said, "Mate! that's no good! we must put ashore!"

Then Pete laughed all over his face.

"Larboard watch and four Heligolanders to the pumps! Starboard watch, clear the decks!" The others he sent down into the hold. They thought, "If we had only left the damned fellow to drown!" and went about their duty in silence, doing it like men.

For four hours they stood on the precipitous deck, the sea washing over it, and worked for their lives, with their eyes open and their hands alert. The mate of the *Gude Wife* stood by the helmsman, glass in hand, in his dripping clothes, stiff with cold, looking out for help.

Then, when evening came, and it was almost dark, two tow-boats appeared by the Scharhörn heights, sent from the shipowner.

A few hours later Anna Boje came running up, having heard at the house where she was lodging that the *Gude Wife* had come in. She had rushed past the signal-house in the wind and the driving rain, wrapped in Anna Marten's heavy coat and on her head a bright handkerchief, lent her by the landlady, down to the quay. There she saw the dismantled ship. Three men in oilskins were standing, talking together, by one of the boats. She went up and asked them. Hearing the voice, the youngest turned round, and they recognised one another.

At first he was astonished by her appearance. "Mother isn't ill, is she?"

She looked at him with laughing eyes. "No; they're all well."

He walked a few steps aside with her and said, "What is it, Anna? You're very strange!"

So she told him what had happened. He was delighted, and asked all sorts of questions. "It's lovely," he said, "that you're to get married so easily and smoothly. It's always uncertain with a girl."

"What do you mean?"

"Well," he said, "one is wanton; another suffers from hopeless love; a third becomes an old maid, and queer at that. But you've come easily and smoothly into harbour, and I am ever so glad!"

"You don't know, Pete," she said gravely, "whether it has been so smooth and easy. You've been far away all the time. Even if you'd sat by my bed every evening you'd never have seen. What does a brother know of his sister? But who's that? Your dear brother-in-law?"

On the same evening, while the storm rose still higher and men struggled desperately for their lives upon the sea, Pete Boje was talking to the shipowner, who had come to Cuxhaven in his anxiety for the fate of his two splendid ships.

"What I consider of most importance," said the quiet elderly man, "is not your invention of improvements which seem to work well, or your having performed an action to-day which, though it has brought in a considerable sum of money to me and to yourself, could have been accomplished by a man whose ability was not accompanied by any steadfastness of purpose; but rather that I feel certain that you would carry out anything you undertook with that ability, thoroughness, and constant attention which comes from devotion to a thing for its own sake. Such men are rare, and they are of great value to the head of a big undertaking. It is on that account that I purpose, if you agree, to send you at once to Gateshead to examine the three-master that is now in the yard there. I am sending some one who knows how to use his eyes. . . . I should be glad not to have any more ships built there."

On the same evening, while the storm howled, making more than one young wife a widow, Anna Boje found rest, Anna whose heart beat so passionately behind the quiet nobility of her face, the shy purity of her eyes. After they had sat together some time in the coffee-room he took her up to her room, and was going away.

"Good-night, gude wife," he said, kissing her.

"Good-night, gude man," said she, accepting the kiss.

But they could not let each other go; a flame burned up within them in whose happy glow they sat blissfully together far into the night; and as they sat Anna thought: "Kai Jans would never have done for me — think how he broods and tor-

tures himself. No, I am in the Holyland now!" she laughed softly.

Next evening they went by train to Hilligenlei, arriving in the dark. Pe and Anna walked on in front: Pete and Kai behind. When they reached the turning from the station road into the harbour street Kai broke the long silence by saying "Tell me — what did you think of when you jumped overboard yesterday afternoon? I want so much to know?"

"What do you mean?" said Pete in his quick fashion. "What did I think of? Money, of course. That jump earned me at least two hundred and fifty pounds. Money and advancement, that's what I thought of."

"You did not think of anything else? I mean, the parlous plight of the men . . . ?"

"No," said Pete in some astonishment. "No, I didn't think about that. By sailing away from Heligoland in that leaky ship I put them in a much more dangerous plight. No, I thought of the value of the ship and the cargo. I thought of myself, that is to say."

"What about those two men who were drowned? Those two boys are being tossed up and down by the waves now."

"What has that got to do with me?" said Pete in angry surprise. "They chose to come!"

"Yes, because they trusted you."

"Trusted me! Nonsense. They wanted the money."

"Indeed," said Kai, turning away.

At that moment a man came up to them whom neither of them recognized in the darkness.

"Have you heard about the death of the young Mecklenburger? The sixth man who went down at the same time told us. He said 'Boys, let us pray,' and then he recommended his soul to God, and begged for a speedy death. Here in Hilligenlei one hears such a lot of bosh about 'Holyland,' everlastingly 'Holyland': seriously in church and jestingly on the skittle ground; but this . . . this seemed to me a real leap out of darkness and terror right into the 'Holyland.'" With these words the man went on his way.

"That was good!" cried Kai Jans aloud. "Oh, that was good." And from the sound of his voice it was audible that the lump in his throat had gone. He went down the harbour street without a word to Pete.

Pe Ontjes and Anna had gone on ahead; they found the mother sitting at the machine.

"Here we are," said Pe. "We've made peace, and the wedding is to be in four weeks, mother!"

Anna took her mother's hand, and, holding it fast in her own, said in a gentle and affectionate voice: "We would stay with you, mother, but there is someone outside who wants you: whom you haven't seen these two years. So we are going across to Uncle Lau's." They went out by the kitchen door.

"Someone for me?" said Hella Boje; "someone who has come with you?" With trembling knees she went along the passage, and, finding no one there, opened the door and looked out into the darkness. She was about middle height, bent already by anxiety about her children, and by sitting at the machine. On the damp, windy street lay the last leaves from the chestnuts. "Pete!" she said. He came to her across the street, put his arm round her, and went in with her, stroking her hair. She wept with joy. "Oh, my boy! To think of having you again!"

"Yes, mother — and just think. . . ." He told her of his good fortune, saying nothing about his leap into the sea. She rejoiced indeed. "Oh," she cried, "now you will be often on shore."

"I shall come to Hilligenlei twice a year at least. You shall have some satisfaction from your eldest!"

"Oh, Pete, I've always had that — always."

"Now, then, have you sat at the machine all day?"

"Oh, no; not all the time."

"I'm not so sure," said he; "you're worn out and look anything but well. Anna is as good as married. I'll look after Hett. Heinke is a clever girl, and will earn her living yet. . . . I'll tell you what . . . there's room in the loft, isn't there?" And, before she knew what he was about, he had seized on the heavy machine, lifted it up, and carried it out of the room and up the stairs, calling out "Your day is over — you've done your work!"

In her joy Hella Boje did not know whether to laugh or cry; hot tears sprang to her eyes.

When he came down again, and was going into the kitchen with his mother, a silvery voice rang out as the door blew

open: "Oh, mother, Kai Jans has been home from Berlin since the day before yesterday, and he went to Cuxhaven with Anna and Pe Ontjes! And Anna is engaged to Pe—and I knew nothing of it all. And now there's something else . . . but nobody tells me anything."

As he came out of the dark passage to meet her she stood in the bright light of the door. He saw how she drew up her tall figure as she looked at the strange man with the shy awkwardness of sixteen in her grey eyes.

"Heinke!" he said.

Then she recognised and threw her arms round his neck with a cry of joy, pressing close up to him. He stroked her hair and drew her into the room, shutting the door behind him. She looked at him shyly, passing her hand softly over his sleeve. "How different you look! and a beard! Oh, where's the machine?"

He told her of his good fortune, and how their mother was not to work at the machine any more.

"Really! And the great Pe Ontjes is to be my brother-in-law! Think! brother-in-law!" She laughed. "It's a good thing I have always called him by his Christian name, or it would be awkward to begin now. Really! And when are they to be married?"

"In four weeks."

"In four weeks?" She lost herself in thought. "Do you know," she said, "Kai will have his examination soon now. He is going to be a clergyman; and that's right, I think."

"You are friends, aren't you?"

"Yes," she said, with a gentle seriousness in her tone. "He has always been very good to me. I have had heaps of letters and postcards from him. We find an extraordinary pleasure in talking to one another."

"But what do you think of his search for the sanctuary, or what is it he calls it?—the Holyland?"

She drew her eyebrows together, and looked pensively at the ground. "Yes, what can one say? I'll tell you what I think. I think he is a good and clever man, and that's enough."

"Well, go and say 'How do you do?' to him, then." She went.

He remained alone in the room for some time. He looked

around and found everything in its accustomed place; then a sensation of weariness after all that he had gone through came over him. He began to think of the ship he was to inspect, seeing in his mind's eye the partly built craft and himself going all over it, asking questions, examining the hold. And as he stood there, watching the work, he heard a sound of clicking and pushing overhead. "What can that be?" he thought; "what sort of new engine have they got on deck?"

He got up, remembered where he was, opened the door, and shook his head in great perplexity . . . then with three steps he was upstairs. His mother stood working the machine in the dim light of the little kitchen lamp, lost in thought. She looked up at him in confusion. "You took it away so suddenly, before I had time to understand. I don't believe I can think now unless I am sitting at the machine. . . . I have always thought of your father and you all as I worked at it." She rubbed its shining top and burst into loud sobs.

"Cheer up, mummy," he said; "no, don't cry . . . you shall sit at it two or three hours a day—but not more. Come, now." But she stayed where she was.

"Pete . . . I have worried so fearfully over you all. Every day I have been afraid that you might die like your father . . . and Anna, Anna has gone through a great deal, Pete; and Heinke is so quiet and reserved; and, Pete, I have never talked to the girls about it, but you must know, in case I were suddenly to die. I love Hett so . . . he was the last child I had by him . . . but now, I am so terribly afraid . . . he is not true like you others are."

"I know," he said, and his eyes darkened. "Anna wrote to me about it. But now that I know it will be all right. I shall be in Hamburg and can keep an eye upon him. The boy will turn out all right, trust me for that! He comes of a good enough stock. Come, be of good heart! Think of what I have done already. I shall do more yet. I am going to make tremendous efforts. Forward, forward! ever ahead!"

"Ah, Pete," said she thoughtfully, "do you think you will find peace so?"

"Peace!" said he; "what is peace? Don't talk to me like Kai Jans! Come, now!"

CHAPTER XVII.

Mrs. BOJE was indeed blessed in her children. Things became much brighter in the little gabled house under the chestnuts.

Anna Boje was a happy wife, with no thoughts save for her husband and the daily round of household duties. In the second year she began to grieve that no child came to her.

She had much to do in her home, but two or three times a week she would go down to the chestnut avenue towards evening and sit in her old place, rather more stately than of old, and with a new and beautiful peace in her clear, open face. Her mother sat opposite her, sewing, while Heinke was busy in the kitchen.

Now and then the mother would shyly throw out a brief question over this and that, and give a brief word of womanly counsel. The young wife made no reply, or turned aside her fair head as if to say, "I don't want to talk of that." And yet the mother knew that not a word was lost upon her daughter. When she went home, and stretching up her erect figure felt the blood course swiftly through her veins as she stepped out like a lioness, as Pe Ontjes said, she thought, "Who is to have children if not I?"

One evening, when they had been married nearly two years, her mother began again, without looking up from her knitting, "Tell me, my child — I think so much about it! I will never say another word on the subject — but, children are part of a true marriage. Tell me, you love one another?"

"Mother!" said Anna. "What do you think? Of course we love one another!"

"That is right," said Hella Boje; "but you know — it is possible to love one another too much." She bent over the work in her lap. "Your father was a man of quick, passionate nature, like Pete; but when he took me in his arms he was as calm as a king."

Anna said nothing, and pretended not to hear. But in the evening, however, she was alone with her husband, and as she lifted up her arms and dropped them again in undoing and spreading out her long, smooth hair, he came up to her and began to play with her hair. Then, looking earnestly at him, she said, "Wieben Peters! You think that it is all right if your beard is yellow and your heart is warm, but if you love your wife you must be peaceful and glorious, like a king!"

"Indeed!" said he. "And what must *you* be like?"

She cast a distrustful glance sideways in the mirror, as she often did, and said, laughing and shaking her long fair mane, "Oh, I *am* peaceful!"

So Anna's life went on. She thought only of her beloved, and her desire for a child of his, and her household duties, and had no thoughts beyond — not even for her own people. Her sister was almost a stranger to her.

Heinke was eighteen, and looked after the house. Since the house was emptier, and they wanted more work, they took in two grammar-school boys — from Friestadt, of course. They slept in the room with the gable, and fared as if at home. Mrs. Boje's motherly eyes spied out missing buttons and worn-out trousers. Heinke encouraged their studies with alternate scoldings and sisterly assistance. And she saw that they were well fed, for her appetite was excellent: she was hungry and strong, and possessed plenty of self-esteem, although she was not so bad in this respect as the other Bojes.

At this time she had one secret joy. Kai Jans, having successfully passed his examination, had come to assist the parson at Hindorf, only two hours away from Hilligenlei. Kai Jans!

For fourteen days he helped the sick parson in his lofty duties: he baptised and betrothed, and visited the sick, and spoke over graves, and helped people in all the relations of life. Then on Sunday afternoon he came to Hilligenlei.

First he went to his parents. They still lived in the long house, and Thomas, vigorous in spite of his sixty years, still went daily to his digging. Mala, with her smooth hair and clean apron, still waited in Ringerang's kitchen when the farmers had a dinner and the young folk a dance. On Sundays he would sit comfortably by the window, his eyeglasses perched on his Roman nose, reading the Bible or the Labour Leader, while she sat opposite with her gentle, intelligent face,

reading peacefully the stories in the Itzehoe paper about Lady Alice and Lord Pancook.

The Labour Party, of which he was now the *doyen*, met in the hall, and from time to time speakers came from Hamburg to address them. He attended regularly, but did not believe all that he heard. To his slow-moving mind their judgments seemed too hasty. He accepted their criticisms of the clergy and their condemnation of the existing condition of the Church, for as far as he could see the Church had always been on the side of the well-to-do. But when they wanted to abolish not only the Church, but religion, he could not follow them. His own experience and his knowledge of the lives of others taught him the secret sway of holy and eternal powers over and about us.

When Kai Jans came, his little mother asked after his socks and shirts, and how he fed at the rectory. His father laid his glasses on the table, and, drumming softly with his fingers on the window ledge, said, "I don't like my glasses on when I look at people," and asked about affairs in Hindorf. He knew most of the people whom his son mentioned, and would recount what he knew of the lives of those whom his son buried, and of the ancestors of those whom he baptised, not recounting mere incidents, but searching for the causes of events. Father and son resembled each other so much that these experiences sank in and gave to the son the outlook upon life and the world of a man of sixty years. He would sit there for hours listening to his father, his eyes fixed thoughtfully on the ground, on the intelligent face of his father, or gazing out to sea across the harbour stream. He said little and seldom passed any judgment: he used his eyes and his ears.

At a time when most young men thump the table and cry "We're ready; examinations and pondering over things are over for us!" Kai Jans was beginning to feel that it was all a riddle, himself, the world, life in general. At a time when all his friends were started in life, when Pe Ontjes Lau — well, the great Pe Ontjes Lau was really started in life at ten years of age, when he began to wear the Jutlander's woollen cap! — when Anna Boje at twenty-six was a self-reliant, full-developed character, when Pete Boje knew exactly what he wanted, when Tjark Dusenschön had been going for years through the streets of Hamburg with perfect self-assurance,

Kai Jans, like the oak, which is the last of all the trees of the forest to don its green, because its wood is the hardest of all, Kai Jans was just beginning to put from him the wild, undisciplined enthusiasms, the exuberant caprices of a youthful intellect, in order, with the calm reflection that brings furrows to the brow, to listen for the murmurs that stir up among the tree tops and down in the brushwood of the mighty forest. And at this time when he was growing to manhood, his best helper was the old navy, Thomas Jans. He gave him the best inheritance that any man may inherit in the experience of a long and earnest life. But while his father stirred the deepest mysteries of the soul in hasty, tentative phrases, Kai Jans, with the shy embarrassment of youth not yet confident of itself, was silent, unable to argue with the elder man.

On leaving the long house, he went, still lost in thought, straight to the little gabled house under the chestnuts. And here he became merry; he would sit cosily in the chair by the window and chat with Mrs. Boje and Heinke, looking out into the street, and making jokes at the expense of the passers-by, and this and that in Hilligenlei, telling them about Hindorf and the good rector, and hearing news of his old friends.

"Pete was here last week," said Heinke. "He came in the morning and sat down in that chair that you are sitting in now, saying it was so gloriously quiet and cosy here that he would stay for three days. He was going to see you in Hindorf, or take me with you. But when he saw that things were all right here, and after he had talked with Pe Ontjes about the price of corn, he said about three o'clock in the afternoon, 'I think, mother, I had better get back to-morrow morning early; we have got our hands full with a new schooner.' So I went with him to the station about five o'clock. Do you know, the one who is getting on the fastest of all of you is Tjark Dusen-schön! Pete says he has a fortune already, and none of you have anything." She laughed in merry mockery.

Kai Jans and Mrs. Boje began to speak of his childish days. She tried to join in.

"You be quiet," he said, "you were a baby at that time, no bigger than the leg of this chair!"

"That's a lie."

"A lie, indeed? I saw you when you were only twelve days old!"

"That's not true, it's only your boasting. You always talk as if I were your grandchild; there are only eight years between us, after all."

He laughed, enjoying her scorn. She tried to be really angry, but casting a rapid glance at his face and seeing how full of merry roguishness it was, she laughed softly and said gaily, "You cannot make me angry."

"Nor you me," said he, looking at her with genuine affection in his serious eyes. She nodded to him and bent again over her work to hide the confusion in her eyes.

When he got up to go he said, "Will you come with me to Anna's?"

It being Sunday she had time to come: rejoicing every time they met anyone on the road who could see her with him, thinking that everyone must rate him as high as she had done from her childhood's days.

After sitting with Anna and Pe Ontjes for an hour or so, she went with him out of the town on to the heights. Here the calm, gentle peace of evening on the way to the quiet of his village, and the presence of this pure young creature by his side, called forth from his soul all his secret thoughts and aspirations.

"There is no one else to whom I can talk about these things: you are too young perhaps, but even if you don't understand everything you listen so sweetly, and you are so dear and so full of worldly wisdom—far more so than I shall ever become. . . . Heinke, I don't know, I really don't know where I am. . . . I am afraid you have always been right in saying that I am unfit to be a clergyman—I think I shall have to give it up altogether. . . ."

She was silent for a space. Then, "You don't believe what you have to say in your sermons?"

"Ah, child, it is not so simple as that. I will tell you. I certainly do not believe the faith one is taught first in school and then in church, that as far as I can remember I have never believed; no conscientious man with any intelligence can believe it."

"What do you preach then?"

"Ah, child, at first that was a great trouble to me. For a time I thought that because I could no longer accept the faith of the Church I must give up Christianity altogether. I was

in despair; the whole thing seemed nonsense to me. Then about a year ago I had to bury quite a little child. A little time before, an old woman in the village had told me she had lost first her parents, then her husband, and then her elder children, but the hardest of all had been the loss of a child that was still at her breast. Thinking of this, I spoke to the young mother by the side of the open grave, without any text, without saying a word of the hard old faith, original sin, redemption by blood and the like, only seeking for some words of consolation . . . and I found it, at last in this . . . 'Deliver us from evil, For Thine is the Kingdom.' . . . And so I preach now as much as I can in the Saviour's words, of the childlike, tender, human elements in Christianity, of trust in God, courage, love of our neighbours and eternal hope. That's what I preach about. But I have no assurance, no sense of unity. I am myself in a state of miserable uncertainty; the want of clearness in my thought is a terrible pain."

"If you preach what is pure and lofty, that is enough," said she. "You should be content."

"But I am not," he complained. "If I were only like other men! They have their profession and their hobby and play with their wife and children, while I torture myself about questions which no human intellect can decide."

She looked at him with her clear, honest eyes. "You are still young," she said, "you will find some certain good at last."

He was utterly despondent. "I find! I am not even fit to be a village priest. I stand before the world like the ox before the stall, wondering, wondering, able neither to go in nor to come out. However I prick up my ears I cannot make music out of life or the world."

"Shall I tell you what you must do?" she said. "You must go out into the world again. You must learn more and see more; that is what you want, I think. If it does nothing else, it will pass the years of restlessness away."

"Well," said he, "I have a friend in Berlin, a politician, the son of well-to-do people. You and he are the only people to whom I talk about my troubles. Once a fortnight he writes to me, 'Come back here for a few years. Three years ago we were both too young and stupid, especially you. Come back now and learn.' Sometimes I think it would be the best thing

to do. Then I am afraid I am too simple-minded for scientific studies. . . . Ah, child," he said, "my gloomy affairs will make you sad — let us talk of other things."

She shook her fair head and said in her soft, melodious voice, "Tell me more, more! You don't know how I love listening to you. If I could only help you!"

On the Volkersdorf summit she said goodbye and turned homewards. The way seemed to be through a beautiful shining haze in the happiness of the thought that the dearest, cleverest man in all the world had walked by her side, laid in her hands the deepest secrets of his soul. Her own was still shrouded in the dreams of youth.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ANOTHER year passed.

On a beautiful Sunday in October, a fresh wind blowing from the west, Anna went one afternoon to see her mother, as her custom was. Her mother heard her step as she passed under the window, and recognising her daughter, saw with a mother's sharp eyes that there was a difference in her carriage. When her lovely visitor entered, however, she made no remark but talked of other matters, how Pete had written, Hett had sent home his washing, Heinke was with a friend.

Anna listened, looking now at her mother, now out of the window, with something roguish in her eyes.

Her mother thought, "Two can play at this game," and she went to the chest of drawers that stood to the right of the door, and kneeling down took out a little bundle of linen, then, seating herself again, she began to stitch a button on to one of the tiny shirts. Anna sat opposite her, her sparkling eyes wandering from her mother's work out to the street, covered with great red and yellow leaves, with great shining brown fruits lying among them bursting out of their skins; she sat quietly without saying a word.

Then Heinke came in from her walk, nodded her dainty fair head, and saying abstractedly, "You there, Anna," went up to her mother's sewing-basket to look for something. Seeing her mother's work she went out again. Shortly afterwards, when Anna went out into the passage on her way home, Heinke, coming out of her room with a book in her hand, met her. Anna took the book from her, and seeing that it was a volume of Goethe, said in a depressed tone, "That is over my head, and Pe Ontjes does not care for such things either. . . . It is nice that you have Kai Jans for a friend; he can help you." She laid the book on the table.

Heinke left it there, saying, "I will walk home with you." When they were outside, with a movement of shy tenderness,

she put her arm through her sister's, a thing she never did, and Anna took the hand that rested on her arm. The two tall, beautiful women walked together in silence, striking their feet as they walked against the ripe chestnuts on the ground. As if to show her suppleness, Anna, without letting go her sister's arm, bent down to pick up a burst chestnut, out of which the shining brown fruit peeped: lost in thought she let Heinke's hand go. A few great red leaves fell on either side of them; the autumn sky was clear and high above them. Anna's thoughts oppressed her, and she began to weep softly.

"Heinke," she said, "I have never showed you that I love you, but I do love you very dearly. . . . You must take your soul in both hands . . . you don't know how fearful it is to let a great love root itself in one's soul, and then have to rend it out with one's own hands when it has grown there. . . . Take care you do not grow to care so for Kai Jans."

Heinke let her fair head droop and said softly, "I know he is fond of me . . . and I am glad of it—but I have no further thoughts. I am only nineteen, Antje."

"I ought not to have said anything," said Anna.

"Oh, yes," said Heinke, "I am glad of it; then I shall be on my guard."

"You are like me in appearance," said Anna, "except that your eyes are softer and your hair a shade darker; I expect your nature will be like mine, and on such natures may fall an agony, upon which may God have mercy!" Her voice broke and she wept.

Heinke understood that her sister spoke of an agony which she herself had felt; she pressed her hand and said, "Don't be afraid on my account. I am happy in my old friendship with him and will try to keep an even more careful watch on my actions than I have done. Oh, I have so many plans to carry out!" She laughed gaily. "What do I know of such tremendous things as Love and Marriage? I am still quite happy as I am."

Anna grew calm once more. But from this time there was more confidence between Heinke and her sister; she came to see her often and helped her, as her time grew near, in the work of the house. As the year went on she grew into womanhood; she stood in her shy, trembling purity like a young birch

alone on the heath, stirred by no human hand, only by wind and rain.

Kai Jans . . . Kai Jans did not stir her. Had he awakened her, after one short moment of blissful confusion she would have become his bride; she would have cried out rapturously, "For years I have loved you beyond everything in the world."

But his thoughts were far, far away. Quite other things occupied him. By painful and obscure conflict he won his way to manhood, learning in the quiet loneliness of the village from deep and scholarly books, and from the serious duties of an office which set him in the heart of the movement of human existence. Sensitive from childhood up to all that was natural, genuine and true, looking even then with eyes like those of the first man in astonishment at a world awry, now as a man he found himself face to face with reality, and found its aspect at each new examination more hideously unendurable. The utter confusion in each individual existence, the pettiness and falseness of society, the miserable failure of the State, the wooden and unmeaning formulæ of the Church, the slow, bloodstained progress of humanity rose before him inexplicable and meaningless. There was no answer to his question there. In his need he walked over the heath and among the woods around his home; he went to the Bible and studied more learned books. But there was no answer there.

Silent, with thought-sick eyes in which the need of his soul had hung out its signals of distress, he came down to Hilligenlei. He sat opposite to his father and listened to his experiences without finding any cheer in them; it was all a strange confusion. Then he went to Heinke Boje. He did not ask of her to understand everything; he came to her as a big boy comes to a dear, innocent friend when the world and the workings of his conscience trouble him. And she found the right, although she had no learning, by the insight of a sincere and sensitive nature.

"Do not fear," she said; "do as your friend asks — accept his help and spend a year or two in Berlin — go, Kai! We can easily prove to your parents that it is wise; they will understand, they are intelligent."

"Yes," he said, "I think it would be the right thing for me to go, else I am afraid lest the Church hold me fast in her clutches. I want to see with my own eyes the state of my

people in these disturbed times, to learn for myself what is being and can be done to help them through."

One day, when she went up to the heights with him, he saw that she was depressed. At first, when he asked her about it, she denied it; then she admitted that her mother had been scolding her again.

"I cannot get on with mother," she said; "she is always talking of my evil character."

He shook his head while her eyes filled with tears.

"When I was at church the other day the parson preached about Hell and eternal damnation, and I felt in despair. I don't know what to do with myself." Her head drooped and she wept.

In the midst of his own trouble he was almost glad to have an opportunity of helping her; he talked to her earnestly and encouragingly. "Ah," he said, "you must not simply accept it when the Church or your parents or anyone says, 'This is a sin; this is wickedness,' or 'You are a wicked, extraordinary, evil person.' I tell you the misery which leads many young people to the verge and even to the actual commission of suicide is very often caused by the way in which the hard and unsympathetic judgment of parents and relations, of the Church, of society, of those in authority over them make the young, and especially the very best of them, distrustful of their own nature and full of despairing hatred of themselves, so that their very existence seems meaningless, and they themselves are embittered or compelled or actually driven to throw away their lives. Hold your head high, Heinke Boje; dear child of the sunny day, don't mind how the owls hoot at you! Have you not good blood in your veins? Did not your father spring from the ancient race of Todi and your mother from the tall, long-limbed Viromandui? Oh, Heinke, be proud of your appearance and of your nature; believe in it and develop it! Believe that there is much in you that is good and noble—that belief is a hundred times better than the doctrine of the Church which damns us with the fires of Hell. Dear Heinke, there is no original sin! There is original good and original evil. There is original evil in you. You are rather too sensitive, rather too easy-going, and your nose is a shade too pointed; but there is more of original good in you—oh, a mass of it, from your long fair hair to your dainty ankles, to say nothing of your

precious soul and your dear spirit! So please me by having confidence in yourself. Think that the Saviour Himself says of you in your youth, 'Let her pass, she is not far from the Kingdom of Heaven.'"

A ray of brilliant happiness passed over Heinke's tender face, and God gave dreaming youth the right word at the right moment — oh, Heinke, you were beautiful indeed at that moment — as she said with laughing eyes, "Ah, if I come of a good old stock and am to be satisfied with my character, let your doubts and depressions go! Trust yourself too, recreant!"

He looked at her in astonishment. "Ah, thank you," he said.

"Go whither your will calls you; believe it shall be justified by the end."

They parted.

One day, just after New Year, he came from his parents' house through the rain and the wet snow to Mrs. Boje and Heinke, and told them he was going to Berlin. He said farewell.

And when Kai Jans left his room in the rectory at Hindorf, Heinke Boje went there. He had asked them to allow this. Shyly as a swallow visiting a strange place for the first time, she entered the long house with the thatched roof. The first thing she did was to break the mirror that hung to the left of the door, when she tried to clean it; the next was to spatter the clergyman's sermon with ink.

She began to feel at home with them when she found that they could respect other people's nature and character, and even found pleasure in their differences; and gradually as she became more confident she allowed her true self to appear, and, as Kai Jans had foretold, she began to find happiness in being with them, and to find joy and peace in herself, and to venture to put in a shrewd word or a jest now and then. She astonished herself, and used to say to herself, "Now, Heinke Boje, what a good, clever child you are. Take care, you're driving your own team now, a young one — so take care!"

In the little room facing south-east, from which one can see far and wide over the fens, she read the letters that Kai Jans wrote to her, and answered them; and she read the beautiful

great books that had once been her father's joy, and understood them. And the clergyman helped her.

Anna Boje bore her first child about midnight in the beginning of May in the south-west room looking out on the Dyke, in the house which Pe Ontjes Lau had bought from Reimers, after she had spent the day in seeing after all the cases of her household. Only her mother stood by her bed and helped with peaceful care. She would have nothing to do with Rieke Thomson.

As her eyes wandered round the room in the time of stress they rested on the ship which hung from the roof over the chest of drawers, and she said to her mother, "If all goes well, Pe Ontjes must send the news to Torril Torrilsen, that he may rejoice with us."

Ten days later, when for the first time she had the unspeakable joy of tending her child herself, Heinke came over from Hindorf on foot to see the baby. She had just sat down after looking at it with shy, silent wonder, when Kassen Wedderkop came in. He considerably lowered his voice at first, but soon forgot and shouted, suddenly lapsing again into a whisper, like a boy falling on to a pile of soft straw.

Pe Ontjes, in spite of his young fatherhood, was in a state of great irritation because a smack laden with barley for him was stuck on the sandbank. "I wish I could sling up the mayor and the fat alderman on to the smack and let them bob up and down in the water."

"If so, sling up some more," said Wedderkop. "The mayor is certainly a wretched creature, a kind of ducal edition of a fool, so vain that he can never judge anything on its merits, but always thinks what sort of figure he will cut. But the real masters of Hilligenlei are not the mayor or aldermen, but people like Heine Wulk and Birnbaum, the publican. They teach the town and give it its opinions. Yes, the real rulers of Hilligenlei are Heine Wulk, with his ill-conditioned newspaper, and Birnbaum, who not only supplies beer, but distils with it into the minds of those who go near him his low and vulgar views on God and the world, and everything that is good or lofty."

"Do you ever go to the club?" said Pe Ontjes bitterly.

"I was there the other day," said Wedderkop. "They were talking about mice. Everyone present told his own mouse

story, his peculiar property and pride; the others leant forward, gazing at the story-teller, not from any interest in the tale, which they all knew already, but burning with eagerness to tell their own story. Suddenly before the story-teller could bring his mouse into safety, another leapt on to the stage, and bit off its tail; and so it went round. Then they got on to politics."

"What are their views there?"

"Do you know they look at things from the point of view of 1875! Everything is dismissed as 'Bismarck's three great mistakes.' And then there's a phrase, a kind of joke they are always quoting. They say, 'Our future lies on the water? No, mark, it lies *in* the water now!' This joke, unlike the mouse stories, each of which is the property of a single member, is common club property. When a new member or a stranger comes to the club, someone is sure to tell him this *bon mot*, looking at all the other members, his empty, arrogant eyes meeting theirs, as empty and as arrogant as his own. After that they told all sort of anecdotes, nearly all of them of a *risqué* description. I tell you, Pe Ontjes, these anecdotes are a pest that corrupts far and wide; they rob work of its serious meaning, and drive all sense of reverence out of life. There they sit in the club, the old fathers of families, side by side with the young unmarried men, laughing at vulgar jokes and ruining not only their own character, but that of all who listen to them."

"But the artisans," said Heinke intelligently; "they are sound."

"Oh! the artisans!" said Kassen. "Excuse me, Anna — those confounded Koreans! Look here!" he said in a whisper, "I spent some time to-day in watching my carpenter standing over his peas and trying to fasten a dead crow to a post to frighten away the birds. He spent the whole morning in doing it! If you order anything from him the most you can hope for is to get something which is not what you wanted in the course of a few months. The artisans are no good. They haven't the least desire for progress. If they ever have a vague idea of what a wretched, narrow existence they lead, all they do is to call a meeting of their goose club or benefit society, at which they are all at sixes and sevens, and do nothing but abuse one another, and the president, Jenkner, the saddler, has to be

escorted home in the evening. They look up to the fool of a mayor or to some lazy fellow from the university as an authority, without understanding that the power of honest work can effect far more than indolent learning."

"Then there is no good in Hilligenlei!" said Heinke.

"Well, Heinke, there are still the labourers. There is the most chance of finding good men and true among them. Whatever one may think of details, they at least have a lofty ideal if they would only keep to it, but they don't. They cannot agree among themselves. There is more envy among workmen than in any other class. Yes; such are the citizens of Hilligenlei — a pack of fools and well-meaning sluggards! Good Heavens! Pe Ontjes — excuse me, Anna — when I was a young fellow of seventeen, although I was only the son of a small farmer, how I strove to find some way of raising myself! With what eagerness I looked for my little talent and tried to make the most of it when I had found it! And you, Pe, and Pete, how you struggled! I tell you what, Pe — Daniel Peters' time of office will be up in six years, and you must be mayor of Hilligenlei."

"I!" said Pe in horror. "I, mayor of Hilligenlei! I, the gooseherd! No, thank you. I am a fox!"

"You a fox!" said Anna mockingly. "A lion, rather!"

This tone in her voice annoyed him. "I am too stupid for a fox, I suppose!"

"Come! don't be angry!" said she.

At that moment Heinke, coming out of the room where she had been sitting by the cradle, observed to Anna that she saw the postman coming. Anna went out and returned with an open letter in her hand, smiling as she read it. "It's from Pete," she said. "He's sending baby its christening robe, and — no! Just listen to this! Tjark Dusenschön is coming here — to Hilligenlei. He has bought Dittmar's house and the big shed behind, and — no! he is going to start a factory — a huge sausage factory, Pete says!"

"Hullo!" said Wedderkop.

"A factory!" said Heinke.

"There's nothing surprising in that," said Pe Ontjes calmly. "That's what one would expect from Tjark Dusenschön. So he is to be a citizen of Hilligenlei, and a factory-owner!"

He leaned back reflectively in his chair.

Anna said, mockingly, "That will be a fine swindle, I can tell you!"

"A swindle?" said Wedderkop. "Why a swindle?"

"Anna Boje is always ready with her judgments," said Pe Ontjes. "Listen! they're at it already!"

A loud tramping noise, like the approach of an elephant, was heard drawing near. Anna had only just time to push aside the best chair and put a stronger one in its place and remove the white table-cloth, when Jeff Buhmann stood in the doorway, in all his sooty height.

"Tjark Dusenschön is there," he said, breathing hard and casting his black cap on the ground. "I say no more! He is a millionaire! Everything is fulfilled!"

"What?" cried Wedderkop, staring in astonishment at the apparition.

"Everything that Rieke foretold — how Tjark would make Hilligenlei great. The customs to be removed, the harbour will be regulated, the treasure-ship discovered! Everything! He has been here in his new clothes, and has bought Dittmar's place, and is staying now at Ringerang's, and has been to see his grandmother. I can tell you, Stiena is simply dancing! When he had come out of her house and was half-way up the street, she ran out and shouted, 'Tja-ark! Tja-a-rk! come back to your gran'ma!' I have talked with him. Everything that Hule Beiderwand foretold will be fulfilled."

"Indeed!" said Pe Ontjes, rising. "And you suppose that if he comes, this factory owner, this Mr. Dusenschön, that I—? I tell you, I will turn him out. I have had enough trouble with the fellow in my youth." And the mighty Pe Ontjes Lau went to his work.

CHAPTER XIX.

OF course, there were people in Hilligenlei who mockingly recalled the past — who said “was not Tjark Dusenschön the illegitimate grandson of that imbecile old woman who lived in the long house and darned other people’s stockings?” Was it not Tjark who used to run out in shirt sleeves and slippers to beg a supper from the clamfishers? Was it not Tjark, that tall creature who had been clerk to Daniel Peters at a shilling a day, and used to talk in such a curiously stiff fashion? So they talked, but only before they had seen Tjark Dusenschön.

His appearance banished any such thoughts instantly. There was no use in trying to recall them; they were gone, never to return; such was the impression Mr. Dusenschön produced. He would go his own way, this calm, serious gentleman, always clad in the same well-cut suit of dark grey, the broad pocket-lappets set well to the sides. His clean-shaven face was thoughtful as he walked with measured gait, his legs somewhat bent. The former Tjark had had perfectly straight legs; now they were somewhat bent, and there was something wonderfully respectable, something suggestive of solidity, about those bent legs.

Who was going to mistrust Tjark Dusenschön? Daniel Peters? The first day, after buying Dittmar’s great empty shed, he went to Daniel Peters’ and met there the two fat old aldermen. He spoke of his hard youth in beautiful, appealing accents, his eyes glistening with coming tears, and, passing rapidly over the three years which he had worked in that house under Daniel Peters, he recounted how he had worked his way up in Hamburg, and then, by speculating in landed property with his modest capital, had acquired a considerable fortune. Looking back now, from the summit of his career, so to speak, on its poor beginning, he had conceived the idea of, if possible, doing some service to his native town — an idea

in which he was encouraged by the fact that the affairs of Hilligenlei were directed by men who could understand the difficulties of a small town in these hard times. And so he went on to develop his idea of a sausage manufactory.

Daniel Peters listened respectfully until it came to his own praises. Then he listened no more, but began to stroke his silky moustache and imagine the speech he should make when the town gave their benefactors, himself, and Dusenschön a torchlight procession. The torches shone, and he stood on the steps of the town hall, "Gentlemen, it was a great hour in the history of the good old town when Mr. Dusenschön appeared upon its scene, and again a great hour when he entered my office, and I, gifted with a mind able at once to appreciate its greatness. . . ." So, elaborating his speech the while, he nodded to what Tjark Dusenschön said about insurance, first and second mortgages, delivery contracts for the navy, etc.

Who was going to mistrust Tjark Dusenschön? The artisans? He gave them employment. Their eyes were dazzled when he drew out his big black pocket-book to make notes. They were mad about him. When he said to Binstien, the bricklayer, "Bring your bill with you to-morrow," or to Sagebock, the carpenter, "Shall I pay yours also?" they laughed heartily.

"There's no hurry, Mr. Dusenschön. The money is safe enough with you." And yet their clothes hung very loose upon them, and their wives said, "You should get Dusenschön to pay you. I have to get things on credit from the dealer." But they would let themselves be pauperised.

Who was going to mistrust Tjark Dusenschön? The well-to-do? In a single quarter he was unanimously elected to the club — the first time such a thing had happened. Other people always had some opponents; Tjark Dusenschön had none. He came to the club every evening at the same time, said little, and drank less. When his new motor was put up in the shed he gave a little champagne breakfast, laughing as usual in his quiet, subdued fashion, and himself drinking least of all. His behaviour was marked by such unvarying tact that he kept on good terms even with Judge Drucker, with whom every single member of the club quarrelled at least once a year because he could never forget, all day long, morning till night, even in his pyjamas, that he had been an officer in the militia. And

he was, moreover, a man of mild, conservative views, which he was fond of expressing with a reflective nod. "Any one who has had to struggle as I have had to win a modest competency and the respect of his fellows is opposed to headlong advance."

Wild reports about his past spread from house to house.

Some said he had won half a million in a lottery; others that he showed his Hamburg solicitor how to win an immensely important suit; others that the royal family from whom he sprang had pushed him on; others, again, that the daughter of an admiral was in love with him, and had persuaded her father to give him the contracts for the marine; and this last report, in different forms, gained great acceptance, and vastly strengthened Tjark Dusenschön's position.

He certainly was magnificent. For many a man in Hilligenlei it was the moment of his life when Tjark Dusenschön showed him his motor, or the bacon-chopper, or the bone-breaker, or let him peep into the great sausage-kettle.

These were fine days for many people. The independent gentlemen living in Faul Street spent the whole summer leaning over their garden gates, pipe in mouth, telling each other the latest stories about Tjark Dusenschön. When there was anything really special — the introduction of a new machine, or the use of twenty pigs instead of ten — then, and on no other occasion, they would tear themselves from their gates to come and speak together. From five in the afternoon the bars were crowded, ringing with talk of the splendid present condition of Hilligenlei, and the possibilities of its future. Nagel, the locksmith, and Sagebock, the carpenter, whom their wives did not usually let out of the house, would pretend that urgent work called them forth. and, sallying out, apron on and tools in hand, would stand talking at street corners, since they had no money to spend on drink.

At tea-time — that's to say, from eight o'clock in the morning — and at coffee-time — from one o'clock in the afternoon — a perfect crowd of old women sat with Rieke Thomson, Stiena Dusenschön in the midst, swaying on her chair to the strains of a wondrous waltz, her bonnet-strings flying; and Rieke said, as she sat in her big armchair and gazed, now into the street, now across the bay, "When he was a little boy — a thing only a year old — I used to say often he would be

something remarkable. The other children that used to play about here — Lau and Jans and the Bojes — were not to be compared with him."

No one in Hilligenlei was so busy as Heine Wulk and Jeff Buhmann. Their thoughts had always soared above those of the ordinary Hilligenleier, and now more than ever. Not only did Jeff get hold of a plan of the great slaughter-house at Chicago and lecture Tjark Dusenschön half-round the bay about the increase of his business on the strength of it, pointing wildly to the sky with the rusty blade of his knife, but he expounded the idea that Tjark should employ some of his wealth and machinery in assisting the slow demolition of the sandbank. "If you put in five hundred you'll get two thousand back." And, in the rather shy manner in which he always approached his former friend, he suggested the plan.

It was received with a smile. Meantime, Heine Wulk wrote a long private letter in his best style to the editor of the geography used in the schools of the district requesting him to insert in the next edition under Hilligenlei the words "noted for its sausage manufactory," and in a flowery leading article referred to the legend that a son of Hilligenlei was "to make of the town a veritable Holyland."

It can easily be understood that resistance to one who dressed and behaved like Tjark Dusenschön was not easy. There is one, however — one who has known him from childhood — who tried once in vain to make an honest man of him — one who will resist him!

When Tjark Dusenschön appeared, on the second day, on the threshold of Pe Ontjes Lau's warehouse, Pe looked at him questioningly, looked at his great pockets with their lappets, and the serious, clean-shaven face, and, getting up slowly, said, "Take a seat, Tjark — I am glad of your success." Then, with an awkward attempt at a jest, "Now you must help me to have the harbour stream laid deeper!"

A faint twinkle appeared in Tjark's eyes. "That is what I came to talk to you about."

After this he would come once a week towards evening to Pe Ontjes' room and chat pleasantly of this and that, confiding to him that business wasn't going very well yet — the whole thing was too small, too provisional. "At present I can't put any more money into it," he said, "because the great part of

my capital is invested in a cardboard factory in Berlin, and brings me in very good interest."

Anna never appeared when Tjark was there. If she happened to be in the office or the warehouse when he came she departed with a silent inclination of the head. In her calm, clear voice she would say, "You and Kai have often told me what he was like as a boy. People do not change."

Pe Ontjes looked at her a trifle mockingly. "What does Mother Boje say of her children? Proud! proud! Tjark Dusenschön went barefoot as a boy. Anna Boje cannot forget that."

"Indeed!" she said, holding her head high and fixing her eyes upon him. "And what do the Bojes say to Kai Jans?"

"Oh, he's a student!"

"Really!" she mocked, and then turning, went into the sitting-room and played with her child.

A few weeks later Pe came into the room where she sat with her child and said, eagerly, "Do you know, dear, the harbour is soon going to be deepened? Dusenschön will see it through. Though he says very little about it, the Government backs him up somehow or other. It is desirous of helping our town, its natural position being so poor, and has therefore authorized the establishment of his manufactory, and promised to give him army contracts. And, anyhow, I must confess, after watching him pretty carefully, that there is nothing of his former character left. The last fifteen years have made a serious man of him."

Anna's expression was perfectly unmoved. "I have never known a man really converted. You hear it in church every Sunday, 'Whoso is not converted will go to hell,' but I have never met any one who was converted. Some people are said to have become pious and churchgoers, but all their wickednesses are there, under the cloak of piety. I have seen men change their coats, but never one change his nature."

"Good Heavens!" said Pe. "How old are you? Twenty-seven! But you Bojes know everything, and can do everything!"

Her beautiful eyes darkened with anger. The Bojes could not endure any criticism of their family or character. "You're a great, strong man," said she; "but any one with a quicker mind confuses you at once. I knew that from the first, and

feared it." She shut the door behind her and remained the rest of the day in the bedroom and kitchen.

So Tjark Dusenschön was a prince in Hilligenlei. When all the other towns that lie scattered along the wide green outline between Denmark and Hamburg—Tondern and Husum, Tönning and Meldorf, Wilster Krempe and Glückstadt—heard of the fortune of Hilligenlei they mocked at first. They were always ready to mock at Hilligenlei for its laziness, and say it would all come to nothing; so they said, "So Hilligenlei, the Holyland, is to be made into sausages!"

But when they got to know Tjark Dusenschön, and it was explained how he had the Government behind him, their mockery was exchanged for green-eyed envy. This year, when a man from Hilligenlei came to any one of these towns, his legs were stiffer, and his shoulders higher, and his voice shriller than ever before, and he laughed in a superior manner at whatever the others said: even the Hamburgers, who are self-satisfied enough. This autumn the Hilligenlei merchants who came to buy in their stock—a hundred pounds of currants, or pig-iron, or whatever they wanted—were too proud for words, and when they sat in front of the Alster pavilion drinking their coffee their legs stretched half-way down the Bürgerstieg.

Thus, after mouldering away for hundreds of years, Hilligenlei at last blossomed forth again. The glorious old legend of the Holyland seemed at last to be gradually fulfilling itself in the guise of Tjark Dusenschön's sausage manufactory.

And all this autumn the children played as their fancy led them—in the play-places of the moat, the harbour, or upon the heights. Under the old lime-trees by the school the younger boys ran after the elder, calling out the names of the girls whom they worshipped, and doing everything else in their power to irritate them, till the elders turned round, chased them, burying anyone they caught in the great heaps of dry lime-leaves.

And gradually a game began in the little gabled house under the chestnuts—the old sacred game that only two can play; a third spoils sport.

Heinke Boje's year of service was over, and she had come home again. She stood over the cooking by the fire, looked after the two schoolboys in the gabled room, and sat by the window with her knitting or mending. She was a woman

now, tall and stately in presence, quiet and gentle in her ways, and missed the wider atmosphere of the rectory and her talks with the good, eccentric clergyman. Looking thoughtfully out over the dark water in the moat she read Kai Jans' letters and wrote to him, then, shaking off her dreams, she would go to her sister and say, "I want to play with baby a little." She took the child into the sitting-room, and, kneeling down to gaze at it, pressed it to her breast and cuddled it tenderly as if she could never look enough at it.

Then she gave the child back to Anna and went home. On the way home and at her work she became quiet and peaceful again, and had anyone asked her, she would have replied, as she had done two years ago, "I am quite happy." What made her happy was the fact that Kai Jans was her friend, and that unconsciously she cherished a sweet hope.

So every afternoon about four she sat at the window bending her head under its weight of light-brown hair just as Anna had done. The sixth form boys glanced sideways in at the window as they passed, but she took no notice.

She was sitting thus by the window one misty afternoon in October, dreaming. Hearing the sound of boyish feet, she looked up, for the bright young faces pleased her. But when she raised her eyes she saw in the midst of the eager herd of boys a strange young man with a bundle of books under his arm; and as the boys looked in at the window and nodded to her as usual, the young teacher, looking up also, saw the proud face beneath the mass of shining hair, and gravely lifted his cap.

A few days later, as she was going over to see her sister, hatless and in her apron, just as she was, she met the young teacher walking along, deep in thought, as became a scholar, with his eyes on the ground. He was about her own height, and a certain simplicity and goodness in his appearance and bearing pleased her without her being conscious of it. Hearing someone coming towards him, he lifted up his eyes, and stood for the moment astounded by the lovely vision before him. Recovering himself instantly, he made her a deep and respectful bow. She looked at him with the calm simplicity natural to her, thinking happily, "What nice, clever eyes he has! and how serious he looks!"

As she was returning home after playing with Anna's child

she met a little second form boy with whom she had one of her somewhat quarrelsome friendships. Catching hold of him by the neck of his coat, she asked how he was getting on and whether he had anything to do with the new teacher.

"Which do you mean?" he said. "There are two new ones — one thin and the other stout; one black and the other fair."

"I don't know, sir," she said. "I don't ask because I'm interested in the teachers, but in you."

"They're both good — nearly all the young teachers are. The fair-haired one —"

"He isn't fair at all —"

"Well, he isn't dark, either."

"He has brown hair."

"That's Mr. Volquardsen. We call him Peter, because he's good-tempered, and I think Peter is his name, really. He only teaches German, history and English. The other day he took three fellows in the fifth into his room and showed them pictures. He's mad about pictures. The other, the black-haired one —"

"What do I care about your teachers? Run away now!"

In the next few weeks he saw nothing as he passed but the shining plaits of fair hair that lay massed so sleek and neat on her young head. She only saw his fine, silver watch chain, the hand that grasped his books, and his loose-limbed walk. "He's still quite a boy," she thought. "One could not possibly marry anyone like that. Compare him with Kai Jans — a real strong man!"

So winter passed, and the first mild day of early spring came with soft, cautious feet. All the morning she had felt a curious restlessness; strange thoughts passed through her mind as she sang; she felt a desire to dance or run in the green woods, or walk against the fresh, sunny breeze with Anna's child jumping in her arms.

In the afternoon, when she had cleared away, she put on her blue dress and a thin black summer jacket, and walked up to the downs, her wonderful joyousness still with her in the lovely sunshine that filled the landscape before her.

As she reached the heights a funeral passed on the high road between Volkmersdorf and Hilligenlei. In front was the coffin, on a heavy corn-waggon: behind, the seven or eight carts

of which Volkmersdorf could boast: in the background the dark line of the distant Holstein woods. As she stood looking down she thought how beautiful it was to grow up in a quiet village, never wandering elsewhere, but spending there the days of an innocent and laborious existence — to live and to die there, and at last to be buried on just such a first day of spring in the shadow of the venerable cathedral; and the thought increased her cheerfulness.

On her way home, just before she came to the town, she met a little girl, who had been wheeling her sister in a barrow, and upset barrow and all in the road. She laughed as she helped the child to put it all to rights again.

She met no one in the town. Alone in the world, disturbed with the joy of elevated thoughts, she was in touch with the eternal, and in her eyes shone the reflection of this inward light.

As she turned into the park she met Dete Greve, a little girl of ten years old, who smiled up at her, saying, "You look like Ruth going out to her gleaning in the morning."

"What makes you think of that, child?" she said.

"There's a picture of her at school."

Heinke bent down, and, laying her hands on the little maiden's shoulders, said, "I know nothing about Ruth; but never mind, there's a kiss for you." She was fond of the child with her pretty, artless ways.

She had turned under the chestnuts, and was already near home, when the young teacher came towards her. Lost in thought, he did not see her, but just as he passed the house he turned his head cautiously to see whether the fair head was at the window. An expression of half-comic anger crossed his face when he did not see her there, and, like a disappointed hunter, he said, "Bah!" softly to himself, and raised his eyes to find her just in front of him, smiling into his face, the joyousness of her soul sparkling in her eyes and radiating from her presence.

"Oh!" he said confusedly, "there you are!" and, biting his lips and laughing in a rather embarrassed manner, he went on his way.

As she went about her work his quaint expression and sudden flush rose constantly before her. She felt now that she knew not only his face, but something of his character —

at least that there was a roguish sense of humour mixed up with his grave seriousness of purpose. And he had her smiling beauty continually before him.

A week later the mathematical master, a good-tempered but very punctilious man, took his young colleague aside one day in the passage. "You must promise not to laugh at what I am going to say."

He did so, although with a sinking heart.

The other continued: "I know that you come from a good and very respectable family. I expect your mother has always looked after her son's clothes and kept them mended herself, whereas now you have had to trust to strangers. Well, for the last fortnight there has been a piece of black lining hanging out from the right-hand side of your jacket."

At first he drew himself up, and said stiffly he would send down the fifth form. That was all he had to say. Then he became angry and abused his landlady. Then he laughed and asked the mathematical master whether he knew of any good lodgings, and he sent him to the headmaster, who mentioned several names, among them that of Mrs. Boje, the teacher's widow, who lived in a little house near the park. "Their gable room has been vacant since autumn: the woman is quiet and cleanly."

The same evening he spent an hour walking up and down in the dark. Nine times he paced up and down the whole length of the chestnut avenue, deep in thought. He felt that he was about to take a step which would affect the whole course of his life. At last he shook himself and went in; the sound of the bell terrified him, and he looked gloomily into the passage.

The room door opened, and Heinke stood in the circle of light, thinking, "He is playing some stupid trick."

She invited him to come in calmly, though with some inward confusion. "Mother is not in," she said.

He came in and sat down in her mother's comfortable arm-chair, and told her, with recovered spirits and twinkling eyes, the unfortunate incident of his torn coat. She listened with twitching lips and wide-open eyes, thinking, "What a man! he sits there and talks to me as if we had known each other in pinafores—but he's so natural and genuine one can't be angry." She smiled at him. He had come now to ask whether

Mrs. Boje would let him the gable room, and look after him a little. That was all he wanted. He would have his meals at a restaurant, and his washing was sent home. She thought, "Of course he shall have the gable room. What a nice, funny man! To think of his being an M. A. and a teacher."

"We have only had schoolboys hitherto," she said, "never a teacher. We are very simple in our ways."

"That suits me exactly," he said, looking round and finally rising to take Pete's photograph from the dresser. After examining it calmly, he said, "There is a very strong likeness. This is your brother Pete. I have heard all about your family." Looking about him again, he said, "It reminds me very much of my home, all this, except that the room there is about three times as big as this. We have a farm at Lübeck. I like this house very much. The gable is nice, and the shadows of the chestnut leaves play on the wall in the afternoons."

"And the inhabitants?" said Heinke.

"Oh," said he, "I shall get on with your mother. I saw her once at the window: that will be easy enough. You don't know how I manage my mother! And you? I sha'n't quarrel with you!"

"How do you know that?"

"Well, the other day when I made a face at your window, another girl would have been shocked, or offended, or embarrassed; but you did what your healthy mind suggested, exactly the right thing — you laughed at me. You're always natural, and find pleasure in natural things."

"Yes," said she, "especially the stupidest and most trifling things."

"There you are," he said, enjoying her raillery.

In the midst of the conversation Mrs. Boje came in, and Heinke went out to get the supper ready. She heard him go out, with a cheerful good-night, shortly afterwards.

He came next day with his box of books and the unfortunate jacket, and moved into the gable room. He covered the walls with his beloved pictures, and laid a number of grey portfolios of them on the table. And on the third day he made honourable confession that when Heinke stood at his door in the afternoon with the coffee, she was far, far more beautiful than all the pictures he possessed. She saw that he was not one of those connoisseurs who, in their admiration of an antique

portico, forget the child on the threshold, and he rose in her esteem.

Her mother said, "I am sure he would be just as glad to come down and have his coffee with us."

"Oh, no," said she decisively, "he is a very peculiar person, and says he can only drink his coffee among his pictures."

"Nonsense," said the mother.

"Yes," said she, "that's true, unfortunately. He's always talking nonsense, but it's impossible to be angry with him."

He drank his coffee quickly, standing the while, while she stood before one or other of his admirable little pictures, excellent reproductions of new and old masterpieces. He would come up to her and explain the beauty of the pictures in well-chosen words, telling her which of them he had seen, and recalling a trip which he had made as far as Palermo, as a student, two years ago. She felt and understood what he told her about the pictures, and found a wholly new and delightful pleasure in it, seldom contradicting what he said. She admired especially Lenbach's portrait of Bismarck, Dürer's Knight with Death and the Devil behind him, Böcklin's portrait of himself, with Death in the background playing his victim's funeral chant. An Italian princess whom he greatly admired she did not like. "She has got herself up with her coronet and necklace, and is quite good at present, but she will bite very soon!"

"Well," said he, "and what about you? One is afraid when one looks at you; now it's coming, one thinks."

"What is coming?"

"There's something in you I don't know yet. . . . I cannot tell," he said thoughtfully. He looked at her with a scrutinizing gaze, as if she were one of his pictures; her eyes met his, serious and self-possessed as ever. They puzzled one another.

Later on he had a portfolio open on the table when she came, and they both leaned over the table and examined it. He did not mind at all whether the figures were nude or draped, and she saw no harm in it either. With a serious and understanding joy he showed her the beauties in which his trained eye rejoiced, and she felt her soul expand, her cheeks flush, and her breath come quickly, as she said, "Life is ever so much greater and more beautiful when one can enjoy such things."

"Yes, indeed," he said. "And Nature most of all; what

joys she has for those who can appreciate her beauty. Some day we must take a long walk alone together, and I will show you everything I see."

She nodded thoughtfully. "Lovely," she said.

"We shall have splendid times, alone with you, Heinke."

"So," she said, "you've got to 'Heinke' already!"

"Oh," said he, "let me, when we are alone; it is such a wonderful thing to think that I can call the most beautiful thing in nature by a Christian name!"

"What is the most beautiful thing?" she laughed.

"Heinke Boje!"

"So I imagined."

They bent once more over the portfolio, and he showed her everything, tracing the pictures with his finger. He called her Heinke, and she him, 'Peter' or 'Peterkin,' but they laughed every time. Sometimes when they sat together, he would pass his arm through hers and hold her wrist; sometimes she thought, "He is a bold fellow, he does just what he likes!" but she calmed herself with the thought that everything was possible to a pure and innocent heart. He never forgot himself. He was always a kind, teasing brother, talking in jest and earnest to a pretty sister. So their intercourse was free and harmless, and she allowed herself to enjoy the good she found in it; certainly she surprised him, often she contradicted him, and it was no good his opening his eyes wide, and getting annoyed and shaking her by the wrist.

She stayed exactly half an hour with him, then got up and went.

So the ten weeks to Whitsuntide passed away, and she thought, "My life has become quite rich and bright; it is lovely, being with him, with him it is always Sunday."

And to herself she thought "How funny that he does not want to kiss me! He is only a boy, after all, and I ought not to have such thoughts. If it were Kai Jans! He would treat Heinke Boje rather differently!"

CHAPTER XX.

ABOUT Whitsuntide an unwholesome breeze blew over the land, and many people fell sick. It filled the coffins in the little town of Hilligenlei, and one of them stood in the blue-walled room in the long houses where Kai Jans had lived as a schoolboy, and in it his mother.

She had not complained of much pain, but grew weaker and weaker, and when she lay down on the sixth day she knew that death was drawing near. While Thomas Jans ran to fetch a dram from the chemist in the hope of its giving relief, she commissioned Heinke to ask him to give her love to the children; she did not want her husband to know that the end was already drawing near, and she felt she might not have the strength left to say what she wanted later. So she told Heinke also, that she wanted a certain old woman to wash her; no one else was to be present, not even her husband; and if, at the time of her death, the child of the new tenants of the long house were asleep, it was to be wakened, so that no harm could come to it.

About midnight, feeling very weak, she said to her husband in a low voice, "I have always had a difficult temper, and that has made it hard for all of you, but I could not help it. Now I don't know whether God will have any place for me."

Then, for the first time Thomas Jans realised that his wife was leaving him, and he began to weep bitterly. When she began to sink, and gradually to pass away to rest, she managed, in a slow, difficult voice, to speak a few words about her son.

"He has no joy in the world. But don't be sad about it, father; it's better than laughing a great deal . . . only I wish he were near release from it, as I am now."

These were her last words. Immediately after they were uttered the heavenly messenger bore away her soul on his broad pinions.

Two days afterwards Heinke Boje went to meet Kai Jans at the station, and told him about his mother's death. He

walked in silence by her side, and she looked up at him shyly. There was more dignity in his presence than of old, his gait was less hurried, and his eyes were full of deep seriousness. She realised that now he was a man; realised also that his thoughts were far away. It was a year and a half since she had seen him last.

When he turned from the open coffin to the window, his father having gone into the kitchen to see about some supper for him, she went timidly to his side, and said, "Does it grieve you very much to have lost your mother?"

He shook his head. "No," he said, in a calm, expressionless voice; "she was nearly seventy and had known anxiety and hard work, but happiness also, and her death was happy. Why should I be sad? She reached the end in peace; who knows whether we shall do as much, Heinke? I often thought while she lived, that some great misfortune might one day come upon her, but now she is secure. If I am a little sad in spite of it all, it is because she did not live to have any satisfaction in her son."

"We did not understand everything that she said at the last," said Heinke, "but we could see that she had confidence in you. And all who know you have that, Kai, all of us. You do not go along the level road like other people, but through the thickets and over the pathless downs: but at the last you will find, or make for yourself, a high and beautiful path."

"Ah," he said, stroking her hand, "dear little preacher! You always help and comfort me."

He stayed three days, till after his mother's funeral, and another day afterwards: and spent the last two in the gable room in the little house under the chestnuts. It was just before Whitsunday, and Peter Volquardsen had gone home to East Holstein.

On his return from the funeral he went up into his room, and she soon came in with his coffee. Buried deep in thought he did not notice her entrance, then, when she called him softly by his name he roused himself and said, looking up at her, "You look ever prouder than you used! . . . Heinke, your letters have been a great pleasure to me, especially in the last three months; they are full of colour, and intelligence, and thought; the children's play place has grown to a wide country."

A faint wave of pleasure mantled in her cheek. "You helped me so much when you told me to trust my own nature; and the dear people of Hindorf helped me too. I have to thank you for all that."

A sensation of burning love made her eyes dark and misty; she would have said more, but she saw that he was already occupied with other thoughts.

After a time he looked around the room and said, "The man who lodges here seems to be a person of refinement."

She told him that he was a nice young fellow, very well educated, and how they talked together every day.

He looked at some of the pictures, and said, "I am very fond of art in every form, but men interest me far more."

"Yes," she said, "you are like that. . . . I am different," she went on thoughtfully, "I am not much interested in strange people, but I find great joy in nature and in art."

He looked at her thoughtfully. "And yet we are such good friends."

"Just because we are so different, Kai. Man seeks his opposite."

He did not listen, but said half to himself, "My own temperament and my hard youth have made me difficult — that's what it is."

After a while she began again.

"How old are you now?"

"Thirty-one," he said.

"Thirty-one," she repeated slowly, then hesitatingly added, "I am going to be twenty-two."

"Yes," said he, "you could marry now."

She regarded him with the frank, open gaze that was peculiar to her and her sister. "Watch now, my eyes; here is a man's soul bared before you," she seemed to think.

But he said no more.

A vague melancholy settled down upon her. . . . "Now I know, . . . I shall never be his wife, . . . what then? . . . All your thoughts are in Berlin," she said softly.

The word was like a call to arms. He woke up, and said in a voice full of life and animation,

"You cannot imagine what a stir and confusion there is nowadays, not only in Berlin, but all over the country. Think of the extraordinary economic transformation that has taken

place within the last thirty years! People are pouring from the eastern Elbe districts over to Berlin, Hamburg and Westphalia. Thousands of men, taking wives and children with them, are leaving their homes beneath the open sky, where the wind blows free across the wide green fields, because they are miserable, oppressed and landless, and crowding into Berlin. And the way they live there! If they look out of the windows they see instead of the green chestnuts and shining water, the miserable grey walls of other houses with their blank staring windows. They played as children in the meadows and the woods: their children play in slums, where the sun can never penetrate. You may think from that how dreary and confused their minds are; with what sort of feelings they regard the landlords, for whom they have purchased, with the sweat of their brow, the wide woods and meadows that were once their homes: or the Church which sees them driven forth without doing or saying anything to help them: or the rich, leading their vain, peacock existence, a few streets away from them.

"The great economic change was followed hard by a most tremendous religious upheaval. Scientific investigation has undermined the very basis of the two great creeds. Now they are mere lay figures decked out and propped up to look as if they were alive; the great majority of the people know that they are dead, and trouble no more about them. Men have no religion now, and that robs them of happiness and peace and leaves them hopeless, joyless and dejected, without any aim or purpose in their lives.

"In every department of life, of custom, of morality, the same vague search and questioning is going on. It is the same in art, in education, in law, in society: everywhere the same. . . . Every hundred years there comes a period of restlessness, a fever rages, a fever that brings its own cure. The old corruptions will be cleansed from the fevered blood, and instead there will come new blood, fresh and living.

"Once more our nation is convulsed by the need of a renaissance of the three great powers, to which itself gave birth, Authority, Religion, Custom; once more it is rent by the longing to return to nature, to the beauty of religion, of social justice, and a simple and genuine ideal of life.

"And Heinke, the renaissance has begun already, new

forces are already at work, thousands feel themselves already in sight of the Holyland. There is such a searching of the Bible, such a movement in the Government, such a waving of the standards of labour, such new life in art and education! But it is as yet an incoherent stirring and striving; disturbed every now and then by the agonising dread that, after all, we may fail to find the new road, and the new and lovely land of the future, and, abandoning the search, remain imprisoned in our own dead formulas. If that were to happen there would be an end of us and of our future.

"Listen; from my childish days the world about me has seemed to me strange and incomprehensible. Wind and sea I could understand, meadow and wood; but there was much that I failed to comprehend when I came to human institutions, and the circumstances of human life. I carried about with me a vision of another world, a humanity holy and free from sin, and this made me reserved and isolated as a boy; only sometimes I forgot, I laid bare my hidden soul and expressed my wonderment. Then people laughed, Heinke; ever since I was a child I have seen mocking faces round me, as I do still. Two or three only, Pe and Anna, and you, and my friend in Berlin, did not laugh, and they helped me when I was lonely and forsaken.

"I have felt sometimes in these last two years as if I were working my way through the confused darkness to the light. I begin to feel some faint self-confidence: to believe that perhaps I, who have been so derided, may have been right after all; that the great Dispenser has given me no barren gift, and that in my strangeness is something that may bear good fruit, in that to see the world with the eyes of a child is to see it more clearly and more naturally. And so, following in the path in which this new belief directs me, penetrating deeper into the nature of things, reflecting on this confusion, this longing for something beyond, I am resolved to show my people how life seems to me who look at it with eyes that know the dykes, and know the far-off seas; to show them what seems to me evil, because it is unnatural, senseless, out of date and dead, and the way in which it seems to me good may be made to come out of it. I should like to write a book on the German Renaissance."

"Oh, do it," she said eagerly, "it will give you pleasure.

You brood too much; speak out your message, write it, unburden your full heart and you will be happy."

The brilliancy of his eyes and the beauty of his serious face made her marvel. His spirits had soon sunk again.

"Yes," he said, "but if they, seeing as I do the immense complexity and confusion of things, and not knowing where to begin, fail to find the root of the evil, then the old doubt comes back — what is the use of undertaking such a monstrous task? Men will shrink from your harsh judgments, and refuse to contemplate such drastic reformation. Is it likely that you, from the Hilligenlei dyke, can see further than so many great men of learning and authority? Leave reform to them!

"The idea of my name being in people's mouths terrifies me. It is so hard to lay bare one's soul, and then stand by while others mock at it."

Doubt and depression overcame him once more, like a man who knows that even against his will he must do something which is bound to bring suffering upon him.

On the evening of Whitsunday he went away again. He asked her to look in upon his father from time to time and greet his friends from him.

"We seldom see or hear from Pete," she said, "he is absorbed in his work, and has no time for us; he is bent on getting on, and being made senior inspector, and thinks of nothing else. I don't know," she continued thoughtfully, "whether such a life is right or not, whether one gets the best out of life so."

He made no reply.

On the way to the station, passing by the Immenhof, they saw Tjark Dusenschön below, making his leisurely way to his shed. "He doesn't think as you do," she went on.

He answered sadly, "And yet I have had no thoughts for my old friends; hardly even for my mother, always for other things."

At the station he pressed her hand hard. "Well, Heinke, our friendship stands fast. If you are ever in any trouble send for me, and I will do the same. Wish me a good journey and a good year. Perhaps we may find a piece of Hilligenlei, Heinke. I hope so."

These were his parting words.

CHAPTER XXI.

THIS same Whitsun-eve, as Heinke came home, and dreaming still, began to take off her best jacket in the hall, she heard a step she knew in the gable room. Her jacket still half on, she listened in bewilderment. Then the door opened above, and he cried gaily, "Here I am."

"What has brought you back so soon?" she replied, quite dumbfounded.

"I have quarrelled with the old people," he said, sitting on the top of the stairs. "They said finally, 'Get off to Hilligenlei again.'"

Her jacket still half on she stood there, and detecting a lie, demanded an answer on "his word of honour."

He stuck to it that his parents had turned him out. "You see, I was melancholy and dull, and they said, 'We don't want such a visitor; go back to where you came from.' So I managed just to get here in time for coffee."

She laughed. "You are talking utter nonsense! Be quiet and I will bring the coffee."

She took off her jacket, and singing softly — though she had no idea of a tune — got the coffee ready and brought it up to him. And as she sat once more with him and his pictures, the old sense of happy contentment came over her once more, and she thought, "Kai Jans is a hero, the best of men, a dear, splendid fellow, but he is cold and always in such deadly earnest. If I were to live with him I should get afraid and long to be released; I should never be able to laugh, I should always be thinking, 'What has he got in his head now?' Our children would make me anxious till I should know how far they were like him. . . . But the other is sweet and serious, gay and thoughtful all in a breath, like a fresh windy day in spring; he is just right for a grave serious person like me."

She began to laugh and tease him; they called each other by Christian names again.

"If you don't behave better," she said, "you will be turned out here too!"

Then they arranged to take a walk together early next morning, the first day of Whitsuntide. "I have to be back by ten," she said, "to cook the dinner."

"It doesn't matter where or how far we go; we'll stop wherever we see a nice place, and be home by ten."

In the joy of planning, he took hold of her arm as usual, and laid his hand on hers, and she, rejoicing in the precious marks of friendship, turned her hand over so that he could hold it properly, and said, "I am so glad you are back, Peterkin."

He seized her hand and shook it quickly, as if to seal the fair friendship. "It is lovely being with you."

She dropped her eyes. "You are so good to me," she said, taking up a picture, only to lay it down again immediately and say, without looking up, "I must spend all the evening doing things in the house, so that my being away in the morning may not give mother anything to do. I must go now."

After working hard she went to bed, where she lay awake, her thoughts busy with Kai Jans. "No," she thought, "fond as I am of him, I do not want him for my husband; he is too serious, too restless, too strange altogether." But then, when she thought that to-morrow the other would perhaps kiss her, and it would be all over with the secret hope she had treasured so long, that Kai Jans would one day make her his wife, she threw herself on her side and wept bitterly. For an hour she lay in misery, weeping and wrestling with her thoughts. The other was dear and splendid, and she loved him very, very dearly; but he was a boy, not a true man. She thought she should never find happiness.

Before the morning grey appeared she rose, dressed rapidly, and went softly upstairs to wake him. As she knocked he threw open the door and said, "Wait a minute, dear. I am just ready." It did not seem to trouble him in the least that he was in his shirt-sleeves. She stayed on the threshold, watching with a smile how he, ordinarily so calm and orderly in his movements, rushed restlessly about the room looking for one thing after another.

They went downstairs softly, not to wake her mother, and so out.

It was still quite dark, the air quite still. The houses by the park stood there silent, asleep. In front of them the tall chestnuts, clad in their green mantles, bearing aloft their white candles, stood still to let the two young people pass by, in silence, side by side, their eyes on the ground — the man stepping out calmly as if to meet a fair day and life of joyous activity, the girl, womanlike, rather more thoughtful. Behind them came the first breath of morning, stirring in the chestnut tops.

When they had left the town behind them and were walking in the impenetrable grey shadow of the thorn-edges on either side of the way, he took her hand and swung it backwards and forwards, whistling as he went. When that became monotonous he put his arm through hers, and they walked so, he like a younger brother by his sister's side.

"How long have we known each other?" said he. "I feel as if I had known you seven years at least."

"Even more, I think!"

"Look! let's go up this little path. It doesn't matter where we go, does it?"

"Not in the least."

They went along the dark, narrow path in complete silence. In front of them a little bird began to sing. After two or three timid notes he was still again.

"Heinke!" he said, in a strangled voice, "say something!"

"What shall I say?"

"Something nice! I have said so many nice things to you; dear Heinke, do."

"You're ten times as clever as I am, Peterkin. You have told me so often. If you know anything, say it."

"There is something I want to say, but I don't know how to begin, and I don't know whether you want to hear it."

So they went on again, side by side, in silence, each full of restless, fearful longing. From the heights the morning breeze blew fresh towards them. At the summit, near the path, there lay in the midst of the dusky meadow a mighty barrow.

"Look!" said he. "From that barrow we could look east and see the whole country before us. Shall we go up there and wait for the sun? Look! there is a ray of light over by Volkmersdorf already."

"I had rather go on and on for ever," said she.

"No!" said he. "Let us go up and wait for the sunrise — and look! you shall see him, suddenly, in all his glory — please, let me bind your eyes."

She did not want him to, and snatched the handkerchief out of his hand, sorry to think that the joy of their being together was to come to nothing but a stupid joke. He was only afraid of her keen eyes. He implored her with such a serious air and so charmingly that she had to give way, and he bandaged her eyes and led her by the hand.

"My feet are getting wet through," she said; "the grass is so long and wet."

"Oh! don't think of that!" he said softly.

"What a curious voice you've got, Peterkin."

"That's no trifle!" said he.

"What is no trifle?"

"You should see what I see! We have come too early. This field still belongs to the dark night."

"Oh, my feet are wet through."

"Oh, Heinke Boje," said he softly, "don't talk of your feet, but take care that you don't let your soul get cold."

"What a curious voice you've got, Peterkin."

"You should see what I see! To the right and to the left of the old pagan barrow there stand stout men in ancient brown tunics, and shoes of hide on their feet."

"Go on. I am not afraid. They are my ancestors. The race I spring from has lived here for ages."

"One of them is coming near," he said softly, "— a nice-looking young fellow. Heinke, do you know, I think — I think he wants to kiss you, Heinke!"

She stood still and said, breathing hard, "Let him, if he is young and good-looking." She felt a hand on her hair and fresh lips on her mouth.

"We ought to have waited till it was daylight. Heinke, I reproach myself for having let a stranger kiss you!"

They went on in silence. When they reached the summit he put his arm round her. "There's another coming!" he said softly. "Heinke, what am I to do? Am I to knock him down, or let him kiss you?"

"Is he well made?" she said, laughing softly.

"Rather slight, but strong enough."

"Still rather boyish?"

"Oh, dear no! a proper man!"

"What kind of face has he? still rather boyish?"

"Oh, dear no! a splendid, manly face!"

"Then he may kiss me." Again she felt the quick, shy lips on her mouth.

"Is it nice?" he said softly; his voice seemed choked.

"I am grieved, Peterkin," she said in a low, sorrowful tone, "that you allow strangers to kiss me."

He caught her in his arms and, pressing his head against her shoulders, said, "Heinke! Heinke! I love you so!"

Then she took off the bandage from her eyes. They let each other go, and gazed in silence over the meadows to the narrow line of wood in the distance with the bank of dark-blue cloud behind, on which the still invisible sun had laid down his weapons — his long shining sword and longer spear. They lay glistening in supernatural splendour on the dark blue of the clouds, and as the sun began to rise the rim of his golden shield appeared, and soon he stood above the wood in all his might, light blazing forth from him, shining orange through the blue mists up to the arch of heaven, and beneath, the wide land sleeping in holy peace.

They stood still, looking across, then, still silent, went back to the path, and, leaving the heights behind them, came down to a wide green field bathed in the morning sunlight. They went on in dreamy silence, avoiding each other's eyes, he gently humming to himself, till after a good quarter of an hour's walking they reached a little mound that stood up in the midst of the low, green plain.

Hundreds of years ago, when the green plain had been a bit of sea-fen, a log hut belonging to the lord had been built by this mound, as a terror to the peasants round. After a fierce struggle they had stormed and destroyed it by fire, and now there was no trace of the fortress, only the soft green turf and the young oak-trees standing round the mound, while fresh spring flowers grew in the depression at one side that marked the former site.

They sat down on the grassy slope in the sunshine.

Heinke Boje clasped her knee with her hand and gazed, without moving, over the green field across to the low heights from which they had come and the square-built tower of Hilligenlei

just visible beyond. Peter Volquardsen plucked all the flowers within his reach as he sat, and threw them into her lap, looking questioningly into her face each time he did so. She did not stir. This lasted some time.

Then, thinking that the silence had lasted long enough, she took up one of the blossoms, as if still lost in thought, and, pressing it against her mouth, looked up into the expanse of sky around them and said, "Is my mouth quite yellow?"

"Quite yellow!" he said.

"Does it matter?" said she, throwing herself down full length on the grass and shutting her eyes.

Then he plucked up his courage, and, creeping up, kissed her.

At first she thought, "I will stay lying here." Then love overcame her, and, opening her eyes, she put both hands on his head with a gesture of exquisite tenderness.

And now their eyes met in a long gaze.

"How beautiful you are," he said, quite shaken.

"I cannot look at you enough," said she.

"Lie quite still, and don't say anything."

"Dear one! how dear you are!"

So they lay for a long time, gazing their fill, and kissing from time to time with a shy and almost solemn rapture.

Then they rose and went home, hand in hand, dumb for the most part, but now, as they went, they looked at each other silently, and held each other's hands. And when they returned to the lane he took her in his arms and kissed her. Her cheeks were pink and her dark-grey eyes gleamed.

"You are a man, after all," she said, laughing happily.

"Don't be angry; I have really known it all the time."

"Well, now you must let me go; people will pass."

They decided as they went on their way to keep their secret until autumn, so that they could be together as before; they would only confide in her mother and his parents.

When they reached the house she came with him to the stairs. As he stood on the step she gave him her hand and said with a deep seriousness of word and gesture, "Do you love me, now?"

He replied only "Yes — dear!" but in his eyes there burned such true love that she turned away, overcome with thrilling happiness. Their hands were loth to separate.

Then she went into the kitchen and thought as she got ready the lunch, "If I had only told her as I came in," and hoped that her mother might come in. It was so nice and dark in the kitchen. But she did not. "He is troubled, too," she thought; "he is writing to his parents."

At last she had to go in and lay the table. Her mother was knitting winter stockings for Hett, and did not look up. She might at least inquire how the walk had gone off. She began to lay the table more noisily.

Her mother looked up. "What are you doing, child — you are laying three places! Who is coming?"

"Oh!" said she, "he begged so — he wants to have lunch with us to-day."

"Indeed! Have you got something special for him?"

"Oh! he won't mind about that. He — he wants to have meals with me always!"

"Child!"

"Yes, mother! We — he said to me — Mother, why are you crying?"

"Let me cry, childie. I don't know why."

"We sha'n't be married for a long time — two years at least. I want it so, too."

"Do his parents know?"

"No, they don't know, but they suspect. They have nothing against it."

"Is it all right for him to stay on here, then?"

"Till autumn, at least. And, mother, I want no one to know — not even Anna; and I want you to let me go up to him every day, as I have done, for half an hour. We are sensible people, and we know how to behave. I can't bear it otherwise."

And so she brought him up his coffee as of old. But now it was a different matter — quite a different matter. The coffee stood untouched and the pictures unregarded. Each found the other more beautiful than any picture.

He sat at his desk and bent down to her as she knelt before him, stroking her hair and kissing her, and saying again and again how he loved her. She looked up to him with her clear eyes and listened. Then he lifted her up, and she sat upon his knee, and as she sat there she let him feel the beauty of her

youthful body, and gainsaid him not, only saying softly, "You must be good."

He joyed in the beauty and intelligence of the woman he had won, and teased her, saying, "You and your sister — you are really such proud, magnificent girls; no one dares approach you. Even the mighty Lau trembled in all his limbs when he was wooing her — yes, it's true; he told me himself. But I — playing with you! I, a mere boy! Peterkin, you are a boy!"

She threw herself on him. "You're no boy. You are my darling husband."

This summer she troubled about nothing.

Tjark Dusenschön's fortunes seemed at their zenith. He purchased the piece of land behind the sheds, and got estimates submitted to him for the cost of construction of a huge factory. Anna complained that Pe Ontjes was being more and more drawn into the sphere of Dusenschön's activity, as he maintained that he knew for certain that the deepening of the harbour stream would be undertaken in three years at latest. Anna's face grew dark and silent.

"Pe lets himself be talked over," she said, "and that is bad for our future and our child's, but it's worst of all for me."

"How do you mean?"

Anna looked straight in front of her with a fixed stare. "Because I cannot respect him any longer."

Kai Jans wrote from Berlin to say that he had actually begun to work on his book, but was prevented from obtaining any wide or happy outlook by all the individual misery that was continually forced upon his notice. He should never accomplish anything. He did not know what would become of him. At times he felt inclined to go with his friend to South Africa. Perhaps, after years of travel in distant, sunny lands he might return composed and mature.

She took the letter up into the gable room and showed it to him as she had all the other letters. "Poor, dear man!" she said, her eyes filling with tears. "He has always been so good to me — since I was quite a child. I owe him so much. And now he has no joy in life, and I cannot help him!"

"Have you written to him that you are engaged?"

She shook her head. "No! I had rather tell him. I don't

know how he will take it. Before — yes, since I was quite a child — I have often secretly thought that I should be his wife some day. Dear, good man! If he could only find someone to love, that might help him; but oh! she would have to be a wonderful person — clever and beautiful and good.”

“Don’t be sad about it, anyhow. It will all come right in the end. Come here, Heinke. Be good to me!”

In July Anna’s little boy was not very well, and so Mrs. Boje spent some evenings away, sitting by the child’s bedside. Then the two had their meals together in the gable room. They sat opposite to one another at a square table, and he said, “My wife,” and pretended there was a child sitting at each side of the table. She laughed and scolded him, and then sat again on his knee and let him do as he would.

One such evening he unfastened her hair and sat for a long while gazing at her in blissful admiration. Then, taking hold of her with both arms and with earnest impassioned eyes and a constrained voice, said, “Heinke, it is not right for us two — to wait another year before we marry.”

She looked at him with troubled eyes. “No, Peterkin; I think so too; it isn’t good.”

“If you can be ever so careful, and don’t mind living quietly and simply with me, we might have the wedding at the New Year.”

She played with his watch chain, her eyes cast down. “Oh! I should love it! Darling, I am old enough — I am twenty-two. It’s all your fault, Peterkin. I was such a quiet, simple girl.”

And so they agreed to have the wedding at the beginning of the New Year.

They became more calm, talked of how they should manage about their little outfit, and agreed on the names of the first two children.

In these three summer months Heinke Boje became a woman, and forgot Kai Jans.

CHAPTER XXII.

ONE day, about this time, Pe Ontjes came to his wife as she was dressing her child, now quite well again, and said,

"Do you know, dear, I shall have to take shares in Dusen-schön's new building scheme; it's going to be a great affair."

She let the child go and looked at him in amazement. "Oh, Pe Ontjes," she said, "don't. I am ready to approve of everything you do yourself, however dangerous it seems to me, but don't do business with this man!"

Her obstinacy began to annoy Pe Ontjes. "Our businesses are very closely connected. Our customers are the same people. They come first to me and then to him. If his business grows mine must grow."

She shook her head in gloomy determination. "If you do it, it is all over with us."

"With us?" said he. "How do you mean? With our bread?"

"Yes," said she; "and —"

"And what?" said he.

She pressed her lips together, and her sombre thoughts clouded her eyes. "It is over with my belief in you. Dusen-schön is a bad man."

"You're the only person in Hilligenlei who says so."

"That is not true. Old Thomas Jans does not trust him, nor does Tor Straten, the painter, nor Clausen, the carpenter. And there are other people of sense. Even if I am the only one, I am sure he is a bad man. I don't follow the crowd."

"All you Bojes have one great failing," said he, "your hearts are cold."

She clasped her hands and cried in wretched pain, "Pel I — cold! to strangers, perhaps; but to you and my child? I — cold!" She caught up the child and covered it with burning kisses, tears starting to her eyes.

He went into his writing-room. After a while she followed

him and said in a restrained voice, "Pe, dear, you are a lion: you must not go with the fox — that's an old proverb."

He was no longer accessible to argument. "What is the risk? We can separate any day we like."

Her scorn blazed up anew. "I cannot have you in Dusenschön's train, and that's what it will mean. You're there already."

He laughed mockingly.

"I want my great, strong husband to *be* strong and independent, or else I am ashamed. I have been ashamed for a long time now, and I *will* not be ashamed." She stamped with her foot, and cried with tears, "I *will* not be ashamed. I cannot live if I am."

"Go and be ashamed, then," he said drily.

Her face grew deadly pale, and she said, turning away, "Oh! is this Hilligenleil!" Turning on the threshold she said with a kind of fearful self-restraint, "On the day when you become Dusenschön's partner I shall take my child to mother's, and work at the machine. I love you beyond all reason and sanity, and therefore I will have you honour me."

She was gone. Three dark weeks came and went. They exchanged not a word. She spent her time in her bedroom, sitting for hours on the edge of her bed in anguish of mind. He spent the day in his writing-room or the shed, the night in a little bed in the attic, unable to sleep because of his uneasy conscience, which kept him brooding over the idea that her judgment of Dusenschön was the true one, but that now he could not draw back for fear of laying himself open to her scorn. At times the fear that he had started on a false and dangerous road made him groan aloud. At times he felt a passionate longing for her. "Good Heavens!" he thought, "how glorious she looked when she spoke of friendship, how pathetic when she wept." In torturing indecision he thought, "What am I to do? I can neither do one thing nor the other." And he began to be cynical and suspicious of everyone. His peaceful soul seemed to have fallen into a pit of disease and discontent.

During the second week Tjark Dusenschön went to Berlin, taking the mayor and Suhlsen, the fat alderman, to see the cardboard factory. A few days later mayor and alderman returned to the club, their faces flushed with wine, and de-

scribed the imposing buildings and flourishing trade they had seen. Tjark Dusenschön had remained in Berlin for a food exhibition, and to entertain a company of soldiers on a feast of his own manufactures, raw ham and sausages.

On the Friday, Heine Wulk announced in the newspaper, "According to a dispatch we have just received, our distinguished fellow-citizen, Mr. Dusenschön, has received a recognition of the excellence of his goods in the form of a laurel wreath. Such a success will undoubtedly encourage Mr. Dusenschön to proceed to the projected extension of his business here, in which the town will not be slow to meet him. We are also authorised to disclose that Mr. Dusenschön is returning to Hilligenlei by the evening train on Saturday."

As a matter of fact, Saturday saw Tjark Dusenschön's return. The mayor, Alderman Suhlsen, and some members of the club were at the station. Heine Wulk and Jeff Buhmann stood in the background regarding Tjark Dusenschön, with the laurel wreath on his arm, with beaming faces. Outside, as he went down the steps, he was received by a band of men belonging to the Artisans' Musical Society, collected by Birnbaum, the publican, who greeted him with "Know'st Thou the Land." They had decided on this as being the only song, with the exception of "See the Conquering Hero," which made any mention of laurel wreaths. A weak "Hurrah!" came from some hundred people standing in the shadow of the trees. The folk of Hilligenlei had had little experience of public demonstrations. Tjark Dusenschön passed through their midst with grave and careworn face, and they said to one another, "You can see he has something to think about — now — that is no trifle."

Pe Ontjes' bitterness extended to Tjark Dusenschön. The laurel wreath seemed to him ridiculous under any circumstances, and especially for a sausage manufacturer.

It was in this temper that he was standing before his door on Sunday morning, when old Suhlsen came lumbering along and stopped to give a long-winded account of Dusenschön's journey. To cut the long story short, Pe Ontjes asked, "What does Heine Wulk mean by saying 'The town must meet Dusenschön'?"

The old, beer-sodden busybody came nearer, and explained, "Although Mr. Dusenschön possessed enough capital of his

own to cover the cost of building and the installation of machinery, it would take a year and a day to realise that capital for present use. The magistracy was therefore going to propose to hand over ten thousand pounds from the Town Savings Bank, and retain as equivalent shares of equal value in the cardboard factory. We, the mayor and I, have examined the factory, and are acquainted with its position. It is a huge, two-story building with a vast chimney, and three houses attached in which the hands live. Everything is in the best condition and full working order. It has not been entered on 'Change, but its soundness is guaranteed by the excellent condition of the factory and the assurance of a recognized Berlin firm, to say nothing of the fact that the personality of Mr. Dusenschön, his energy and ability are of immeasurable value."

The last sentence, a creation of the mayor's, had been passed round the club and rammed down the throat of every stranger for the last three months; but its brilliance could not illumine the darkness of Pe Ontjes' soul.

"It is against the statutes of the Savings Bank," he said.

"Against the letter of the law," said Suhlsen. "But suppose we were to refuse, Mr. Lau? what then? You know that the government is backing up Mr. Dusenschön, and, it is said, a certain neighbourhood has made him a very favourable offer."

The old man went on his way, and Pe Ontjes, turning back into the office, sat down on the edge of his desk and lost himself in thought. "Yesterday the laurel wreath, to-day ten thousand pounds!" He felt the curious sensation of suddenly in a foreign land hearing the sound of an old familiar voice; and as he listened — how it happened he did not know — but he was going to school with Tjark Dusenschön. There was a clattering of slippers, the sponge that hung by the blackboard bobbed up and down as they passed, the school door opened, and there they sat, side by side, in rows, with Tjark at the bottom of the first bench, and he heard Max Wieber saying, "Tjark Dusenschön's eyes are good, and so are his words; but what he does is always a surprise, and not a pleasant one."

Then they were sitting in the half-dark smithy, Buhmann roaring out his words of wisdom, Scheinhold, by the bellows, waiting for an opportunity of putting in a word, Kai Jans, with eyes like saucers, and his hands on his knees, and Tjark

— his eyes and words were all laurel wreaths, laurel wreaths. And then, yes! then, "You might give me a few halfpence. Grandmother and I have nothing to eat to-night." And next would come a surprise — an unpleasant one — the appearance of Tjark Dusenschön in some new blue tie, or old, red, sixth form cap. Yes; that's how it had been — all the time.

Pe Ontjes was still sitting there, sunk in deep reflection, all his thoughts busy with the days of his childhood, when the door opened, and Tjark Dusenschön stood there. Pe looked up, his thoughts still in his boyhood, his eyes still those he had had as a boy. "You rascal! what have you done with the money?"

Tjark Dusenschön saw the look, and understood it. His eyes wandered. "What do you mean?"

"That company business is no good," said Pe Ontjes, striking the table with the palm of his hand.

Dusenschön went out with some indifferent remark.

The big man of the *Gude Wife* sat down heavily on his chair and relapsed into his brooding. Childish days were vanished. He listened. Now, it seemed, another sound must come — the clear ring of a soft, woman's voice. But it did not come. The door of the living-room opened, and she walked along the passage with her firm, light step, humming to herself.

He nodded. "So! she sees that Dusenschön has gone off double quick, and now she is singing the song of victory, imagining that she is much cleverer than I am, much more capable, and Heaven knows what! One must be stronger than Anna Boje, or there is no existing with her at all."

She rose before his mind's eye in all the glory of her beauty, and roused such a transport of love in him that he groaned aloud.

Leaping to his feet, he began to ponder deeply — to wonder whether he were a complete man — one who could stand alone, quite alone — a man who saw, decided, acted for himself, on his own judgment. Brooding profoundly, he gradually separated himself from Hilligenlei and everything in it — the mayor, the club, the citizens — and, standing alone on the dyke, saw the old town with Tjark Dusenschön for its king, and sleepy or idle men for its leaders, and for the first time he felt love and fear for it. "Hilligenlei!" he said slowly and

softly. "If Tjark Dusenschön is a swindler, and brings Hilligenlei into disrepute before the country, I will know how it stands with Dusenschön! I will know to-day, and then—then, when I know—she shall do penance on her dear knees, with laughter and kisses."

While he was still ordering his thoughts in the light of the new certainty which had come to him, old Thomas Jans came along in his grey, mud-bespattered working clothes, his spade over his shoulder, and his tin canteen in his hand, and looked in at the window with his deep-set eyes.

Pe Ontjes threw up the window, and the old man told him he had received a letter from Kai, with which he was not at all satisfied. "I have thought a great deal about it, and—I think I can scrape the money together. I am going to risk the journey to Berlin. He has often asked me. Tell me, do you know how to get there and what it costs?"

"I will tell you that in two words," said Pe. "It's six o'clock now. You must be at the station at eight sharp in your Sunday clothes with your blue cap and your pipe. I will go with you. If anyone asks you, say I am only going as far as Hamburg with you."

"Are you in your senses?" said the old man in an injured tone. "Do you suppose I can make up my mind to such a step in two hours, and get ready, too? It's impossible before to-morrow midday."

"You must be at the station by eight sharp. Now be off."

The old man stamped off, shaking his head as he went. A little further on he fell into a slow trot. Pe Ontjes went into the shed and arranged some matters in the office. Then, it being time to start, he went upstairs, put on his seaman's clothes, and went down into the sitting-room.

Anna and Heinke were sitting there with the child at their feet. Anna looked up at him curiously with eager, expectant eyes. He pretended not to see. "I am going to Berlin this evening," he said.

"Oh!" cried Heinke, "to Berlin? Do go and see Kai. I have had such a depressed letter from him. The misery he sees there seems to be breaking his heart."

"What are you going to Berlin for?" said Anna. "Has it to do with Tjark Dusenschön?"

"Say that I have only gone to Hamburg. Look after the house." He went out.

Anna jumped up and ran after him just as he was about to shut the front door behind him. With shining eyes she stepped up to him. "Haven't you a single word for me?"

"No!" He looked at her with cold scorn. "Not one!" She turned and went silently back into the room.

Next day, at midday, they slipped out of the train in Berlin.

The passage of time had somewhat shrivelled up Thomas Jans. He pushed his blue Sunday cap well over his head, his keen eyes looking out under the brim. He thanked the guard for their good journey, and then, puffing hard at his pipe, trotted behind Pe Ontjes. After resting for a space at their hotel, they walked down Frederick Street together. Then Pe Ontjes wanted to send the old man to Well Street to see Kai, but he, after a thoughtful glance at all the people and conveyances, and the tall houses around him, said, "I won't risk it; I will stay with you."

So they went down Frederick Street together — Pe Ontjes' tall figure in front, the little old man behind him, stopping every now and then, and then running on again. "Life is rather more rapid here than on the lightship in the Hilligenlei bay, but my wife's idea of Berlin was certainly quite wrong. She thought it was all silks and satins, but I see shabbier boots and stockings than you would find anywhere in Hilligenlei."

At Potsdam Station they took a train which carried them out of the surge of humanity, away from the high walls, through a barren tract of open country, depositing them, after an hour's journey, near a little village. They went up to the station-master and asked him about the cardboard factory.

"Cardboard factory?" said he, "I don't know. I haven't been here very long." He called to a porter. "Oh, yes," said he, "yes; there, behind that wood." He said more, but, being from the eastern provinces, they could not understand it.

They marched ahead through the greyish sand. Pe Ontjes straining his eyes for the chimney and a big, two-storied building with rows of windows. He walked steadily on, the old man puffing at his pipe comfortably as he followed him, his

eyes taking in everything around him. They reached the top of the hill, but saw nothing save a withered wood of pines and fir-trees.

"I must sit down for a bit," said the old man, seating himself on a kind of wall that ran along the side of the road to re-light his pipe. Pe Ontjes climbed up on to the wall, and stretched out his neck and sniffed the air like a greyhound.

"Can you see anything?" said the old man pleasantly.

"Don't knock over the wall," said Pe angrily. The old man sat smoking like a small furnace. After a time he asked again, "Can you see anything?"

Pe Ontjes, who was still standing on the wall, suddenly gave such a mighty lurch that it collapsed, and he came down with it. Looking down at his feet in amazement, he saw that the so-called wall was a mere mass of lime and broken pieces of stone put together anyhow. "Hullo!" he said.

"Look there!" said the old man, tracing out the course of the wall with his pipe. "Look! it's a sort of square, behind the pines, do you see? I see it all now —"

"Huh!" said Pe Ontjes scornfully.

The old man smoked in silence for a time, and then went on, "I tell you what—you know, if a workman who has lived in Hilligenlei for forty years wants to borrow five pounds for the education of his child or any other useful purpose, he could go from one end of the place to the other without getting a penny. But let the first rascally windbag come along and say he has half a million buried in the sand in Berlin, and you are ready to give him Hilligenlei itself, and its honour into the bargain."

Pe Ontjes stood whistling, rehearsing in his mind a series of conversations with Tjark Dusenschön, the mayor, Anna Boje, and Pe Ontjes Lau.

"How long are we going to sit here?"

At this moment Pe saw a man coming through the wood. "Was there ever a cardboard factory here, my man?" he said, raising his voice.

"No!" said the man; "but there is, perhaps, going to be one."

"Tell me!" Pe went on. "Do you know Tjark Dusenschön? He's got a figure like a guard and a head like a smooth, round turnip—which he resembles in other respects."

"No!" said the man, in some surprise. "I have never seen such a man in my life."

They returned to the station, and there sat for three hours in sun and wind on a real wall. The old man smoked, and quoted all sorts of curious parallels—the giant Goliath who was somewhat slow of understanding; Eli; and Absalom, who hung by his hair. Pe Ontjes listened, and sometimes even laughed, thinking of the glorious peace he would make with Anna Boje.

It was late in the afternoon before they again found themselves in the midst of the city, and Pe Ontjes stopped before a huge building.

"Will you wait here a few minutes?" he said to the old man. "This is the Board of Works. I just want to enquire as to what steps are being taken about the harbour channel, and things in general in Hilligenlei."

He was led into a room, where, to his considerable surprise, he found a friendly, grey-haired man from his own district, who dismissed him finally with a thoughtful nod after putting all sorts of questions.

The old man was still exactly where he had left him, his cold pipe held tightly in his hand as if it were, among so much that was strange and new, the only thing he knew, gazing earnestly at the stream that flowed past him as he stood close to the wall.

Their spirits sank as they left Frederick Street and turned off into the dreary, straight streets of the north-eastern quarter.

"Just look!" said the old man. "In Hilligenlei, when one stands on the dyke one can see land and sand over the sea as far as England, and the vastness of the sky above is almost frightening. But here, if one turns round what does one see? A man who lives in one of these great quarries must have a dead weight on his heart or an iron yoke on his neck."

On turning into the street in which Kai Jans lodged they found crowds of men standing in groups of various sizes and talking eagerly to one another at the doors of the houses. Undersized young men were streaming, conversing the while, into the public-houses at the bottom of the street. Here and there women leant out of the windows, and pale-faced children standing on the door-steps followed the conversation of

their elders with an unchildish understanding in their serious eyes. In the distance the gleaming helmets of the police were visible.

The old man stopped a young workman who was walking along with his eyes upon the ground to ask him why all these people were not at work, but the man, not comprehending the dialect, looked up at Pe Ontjes, who repeated the question. He then related in his peculiar German that he and the others were boiler-makers, and now on strike.

"Why are you striking?"

"To put it shortly, because the master won't allow us to have our own beliefs. He won't have us admit that we belong to the labour party."

The old man's eyes twinkled. "He imagines, then, that his word will keep off the great time which will and must come!" Lifting his forefinger, he said quaintly, "The living garment of God changes!"

The workman smiled. "That's Goethe!"

"Come!" said Pe Ontjes, "let us get on."

They found the number, and climbed up three flights of dark, narrow, dirty steps.

"Have we got to climb further?" said the old man. "Do you hear that noise upstairs — all those voices?"

"There's something wrong!" said Pe Ontjes, still climbing slowly up. On the landing the doors stood open right and left. From the rooms to the left came the sound of weeping and female voices. In front of the opposite door there stood a middle-aged workman, holding back his wife with one arm, saying, "Why do you want to see such a miserable sight? You won't be able to sleep for three nights after it."

"What has happened?" said Pe Ontjes.

"An old woman lives here whose son was a bad lot and died in penal servitude. She brought up his two children, her grandsons, who are now about fifteen and seventeen. Well, the old grandmother, a very good, honest sort of woman, saw that the two lads were going to follow in their father's footsteps. They were apprenticed to our smithy. Well, the last few days they have been out of work. They got drunk, and played wicked pranks with a little girl, and then went and boasted of it to their grandmother. That was more than the old soul could endure. She is a good, honest woman from

the country, where such things don't happen. She only left the country eight or ten years ago. Anyhow, this afternoon, when the two lads waked up from their debauch and asked for coffee, she gave them a good dose of rat-poison in it. They're both lying dead now. The police will be here directly."

He went in at the opposite door, and, saying to the women who were crowded in the dark little passage, "Make way!" led them into the room.

There, near the table, on the floor of the wretched room, in the half-darkness, lay the two boys, their bodies, clad in miserable rags, convulsed in the last agony of death, their faces livid, their lips still flecked with foam. By the window sat the old grandmother, her thin frame bent by toil in the fields. She was cleanly dressed, and as she smoothed down her apron with her emaciated hands she said in a strangely calm and monotonous voice, like that of a clerk reading for the tenth time an uninteresting protocol, "Their father lived to be forty, and fifteen of those years he spent behind iron bars. His evil deeds brought misery upon seventy people, his evil words upon seven thousand. They would have done the same. Where is the police? I am a God-fearing old woman, and I know what I am doing."

Lifting up her head, she saw the ten or twelve people who were pressing in at the door, and said, as if to herself, "I am not afraid of anyone—except Kai Jans."

Pe Ontjes Lau turned round and asked the man behind him, "What has Jans to do with it?"

The man took them both to his door, and said, "Some time ago a certain Kai Jans lived for two years with us, and for the last year he has lived with us again. In between he was a parson in his home, but found no peace there. He is the sort of man, don't you know, for whom every day is Christmas Eve; but people and things always spoil it for him. He thought there ought to be much more happiness in the world, if only things could be put right. He came here to try and find the meaning of things. But he hasn't been able to find it. The first time he was here, as a student, he used to sit with us in the evenings, help the children with their lessons, and argue with me about religion and politics. He was always gay and friendly. Of course, he was only a boy then,

and his eyes seemed to see everything for the first time. Since he came back again he hardly talks at all himself, but sits there asking questions and brooding. He asks the children about their thoughts and plans — us grown-ups about our faith and politics — the old people, most of whom came from the country, how the landlords treated them, what their faith was then, what they thought of the Church, and how they feel now, and so on.

"I have never known a man who could make other people talk so, and say so little himself. Generally, he is melancholy and broods. Sometimes, when he is talking with the children, he becomes merry for a moment, only to become suddenly serious again.

"One evening, not very long ago, he had got five or six children in his room. The door was open. He told them how a village boy wakes up before sunrise and helps his father to take out the cart, and as they cross the heath they see the sun rising behind the wood; and they pass through villages, and then through a little town, and see one thing and another, returning by a different way. The boy then goes to a school where boys and girls, big and small, sit together, and in the afternoon he goes down to the shore with his companions. They see distant sails far out to sea, and hunt for clams and molluscs. In the evening they sit in front of the house-doors, and before they go to bed a great thunderstorm rolls by, rumbling like a huge waggon. We could hear him telling the children all this from the kitchen, and at the end he asked, 'Well, what do you think? Wasn't that a lovely day?' The children laughed and said, 'Do you suppose we believe what you've told us? It's a fairy tale, of course!' He left his room and came to us in the kitchen in despair, saying, 'Do you see, your children call the ordinary life of a village child a fairy tale — poor little wretches!' His voice went right through us. I can see him saying it now. . . . Did you say you knew him? Oh!" the man cried out all of a sudden. "I can see — mother! come here; this is Kai Jans' father! . . . Come into his room, please."

On the way he said, "He has known the two boys upstairs, they who are dead, for six years, and he said often to the old woman, 'Don't lose heart, grandmamma! The boys will turn out all right!' She did lose heart, and, I think — she was

right. But it will break his heart when he comes. Here! this is his room."

He led them past his weeping wife and his children, who stood shyly by the kitchen door, into the room. It was a clean little place, looking out on to the gloomy court below. They looked round, and then, being fatigued, were about to sit down when they heard several people running upstairs, and the sound of dreadful words rang out. Pe Ontjes ran to the door.

"Kai Jans!" he cried, "come here!" There was no reply.

Going upstairs they found him at the door crying, "Grandmamma! what have you done? Oh! dear old grandmamma! now you are a murderess!"

The old woman sat still by the window, stroking her apron with the same composed mien. She said with perfect calm,

"It is done now, Kai Jans. This is a much surer way than your endless 'Wait, grandmamma, it will come right!' They would have been perpetually in and out of trouble, and I should not have been able to save them. This was the end."

He knelt beside the children and stroked their hair. "Men are to blame—they who gave no land to your father and your grandfather—else you might have been honest farmers. They do not even grant you a place to stand in; they lift you, four stories up from Mother Earth, and there they leave you. And the man who does not live on the soil, the man who has no land, is utterly lost." He sobbed aloud. "We have nothing, nothing—no unity, no trust, no home, no faith, no love, no hope. We are shaken this way and that like corn in a sieve. What is wrong with the world? I cannot find my way in it."

A strong hand was laid on his shoulder. "Come with us!" said Pe Ontjes in a loud voice.

Kai Jans stumbled to his feet as if called by an angel of the Lord and reached out his right hand, still bent from the night by Cape Horn. "Pe Ontjes!" he cried; "dear Pe Ontjes! Oh, father, is that you? You see—you see how it is with me."

They drew him out into the passage. There a little dark man came up to him, his head drooping a little to one side, and stepped aside with him. "Excuse me," he said in a friendly manner. "I am a relation of your friend—"

"Ah, yes; I know you," said Kai, pulling himself together. "We met once at my friend's house. I remember. We talked about religion. You are a Catholic."

"Yes," replied the other. "I am to inform you that he expects you to spend several years with him. He is starting for South Africa in the autumn." He briefly informed him of the object and duration of the journey. Then, with a certain embarrassment, he went on: "I cannot help seeing that you are deeply depressed. May I say something? I assume that our mutual friend has informed you that I come of an orthodox family. My mother comes from a noble family of orthodox Protestants; my father was an orthodox Catholic, and I have followed him."

"Yes," said Kai, "what do you want to say to me?"

"Your friend, my cousin, has often talked to me of you and your brooding, and yesterday he showed me your last letter. So when he commissioned me to find you here I conceived a burning desire to say to you, 'Cease your brooding; let it be; it will never bring you to the goal.'"

Kai Jans listened unwillingly.

"I implore you," said the stranger, catching hold of Kai's arm with a movement of kindly anxiety. "When I was a young man—I am now fifty—I suffered from doubts and brooding, but I gave it up. It was no use. I pushed it from me with both hands. I said to myself, 'I *won't* brood, I *won't* inquire, I will *believe* the belief and teaching of Mother Church.' And," his voice softened and trembled, "since I formed that resolution I have had the power at any time to step out of the cruelty, the coldness, the sinfulness of life into the quiet peace of the holy sanctuary of the grace of God and the Saints."

"And now?" said Kai Jans.

"I implore you to believe that I have no desire to make you a Catholic. My mother was a Protestant, and happy in her faith. All I beg of you is to nestle in the faith of your Church as a chicken under the hen. Believe in redemption by His blood. And yet the bosom of my Church is the most sure, haven of peace and rest."

Kai Jans shook his head and said in a strangled voice, "You are right. There is no difference between the Catholic and the Protestant dogmas. Each is the desert of worn-out doctrine."

To accept may bring happiness, but it is the happiness of a king who has given away his crown and feels happy in his night-cap, or of a soldier who has cast away his cockade and feels at home in a marauding band. Speaking for myself, I do not want such happiness. I will look into the eyes of the Eternal Powers and all their terrors, even if I go mad in doing it. There is no good in our talking to one another."

He departed sadly. The workman, whom they had met in the street and who had directed them, now entered the room, and, taking hold of Kai Jans, said, "You have seen all our misery. Now go and revenge the dead, and the children sitting in the dark courtyards instead of playing! Who was that pious sneak? Kai Jans, come and join us!"

Kai Jans shook his head despairingly. "How gladly I would if I could! But I can't! You are just as narrow and unjust as all the other parties. No man can serve a party and keep his soul free."

The young workman looked at him angrily. "You can do nothing without a party, you know that."

"That is not true," said Kai Jans hotly. "Those who have effected the most have belonged to no party. Their sense of justice prevented it."

"If you join us you would have ground to stand on and a field to work in, and your father would rejoice."

"No, no! not thus will I win my ground, my field; that were no Holyland. I cannot accept any orthodoxy, either political or religious. I cannot. Don't be angry with me."

"Come!" said Pe Ontjes stiffly. "Make an end of this and come with us."

"Go, then," said the workman good-humouredly, giving him his hand. "One cannot do what the heart does not desire. But do not forget us." He, too, departed.

Kai Jans put together the things he wanted to take with him, and, after paying his landlord, followed the other two, leaving his host standing sorrowfully at the door.

Work hours were over when they left the north-east, and the streets were crowded with thousands of workmen, women, children, and vehicles — an army that now seemed to be trying to get back into its ordered ranks, and now wandered this way and that without aim or purpose. The throng was held in and cramped by the high, steep walls that rose up on either

side. Far in the distant west the glow of evening burned in the wide sky above. Kai Jans said sadly when he saw his father stop to gaze at the stream of human life before him, "There are not a hundred men in all these thousands who know the real meaning of life. Look at the red in the sky! How far we are from God and Nature! how far, therefore, from happiness!"

They retraced their steps down to the station, where they had some refreshment and sat in deep depression of spirit. When they came out again it was night.

Half an hour later they were speeding through the night on their way to Hamburg. The old man sat in the corner with his pipe, as if crushed by some mighty power. Gradually the hand which held the pipe dropped on his knee, and his drowsy head sank on his breast. Pe Ontjes lay stretched full length on the seat, fighting in his sleep against Tjark Dusenschön and the Hilligenlei authorities, without minding, in the stress of his rage, that Anna looked at him with laughing eyes and shook his body from side to side.

Kai Jans sat staring in front of him, his mind painfully retracing the events of the last few weeks and the shocks they had brought, re-living the vain broodings, the fruitless search that had occupied his soul since childhood, declaring at last,

"All is over. It is all without meaning or purpose. What is there to do? Go out of the world, or drag on this dreary tedium of existence? Neither the one nor the other was possible. What then? There is a third alternative. One can go mad, mad, mad—yes, go mad! that was it! Get out of the train at Hamburg and tell all the people in the station and in the streets, 'Children of men, why do you run about in this restless way? Why are your faces so careworn? Why are your children so pale and downcast? Why don't they go and play in the woods? Why do the young toil and moil instead of wearing flowers in their hair? Why do you live, so many of you, in hideous darkness? Why do you have huge prisons, huge asylums? What is the matter? Are you mad? Don't you know that round Hamburg there is a whole world of holiness and joy? Look about you! Open your eyes! Don't you see—all around you is Holyland?'"

For an hour his mind travelled painfully on the brink of the

awful abyss, drunk and disordered by the bitter draughts of misery, till merciful nature gave him the relief of deep sleep.

In his sleep he saw a vision of peace. A great bird, white-winged, as large as a heron, came flying towards him with a gentle motion of his vast wings, and said, "Seat yourself upon me, and I will show you something that will make you rejoice." As soon as he had taken his seat he felt a sense of freedom and joyous expectancy. They flew over land and sea so swiftly that they seemed merely to traverse meadows and ponds, till they came to a high range of wooded mountains, and there, upon the summit, they halted. Then his companion said to him, "Do you see?" As he raised his eyes he beheld a wide and wooded land swelling gently here and there, across which the fresh breeze blew like the breath of God. At the fringe of the woods were big, sunny houses, standing in gardens, in which people were at work, tall and strong, with purity shining in their eyes and peaceful thought enshrined upon their brows. And as he looked down with a sense of exquisite contentment, he heard a voice at his ear, and, turning round, saw the eccentric old sailor with whom he had once, sixteen years ago, spent three days on shore near Vancouver; and, behold! this was the land he had seen then! "Look!" said the old sailor, "it is given to you once to behold the Holyland because you have brooded over it so passionately." With these words the vision vanished.

He never saw it again, waking or dreaming, but for the few years he was still to live it was a secret source of strength.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was evening — the moon had just risen — when they arrived at Hilligenlei Station. Clausen, the contractor, Torstraten, the painter, and a couple of healthy-minded young tradesmen who had held aloof from the society of the club, came up to Pe Ontjes and asked where he had been. Like Pe, they had hitherto troubled their heads very little about the town and its management, absorbed in their business and their families; but since yesterday their suspicions had been aroused. Pe Ontjes related what he had seen.

"That's it!" they said. "He suspected that you were on his tracks, and got hold of the ten thousand yesterday!"

"Where is he?" said Pe Ontjes.

"He's in the club, if he hasn't made off already."

"I am going to the club," said Pe Ontjes quickly. "You look for him elsewhere." He looked up and down the street. "We must get more people to look for him. Where can we find them?"

Some people, women and children among them, ran up the street towards the harbour. "What is up?" said Kai Jans.

"Yes; what can it be?" said the others. "Before, we saw some people running as if mad down to the harbour."

Nagel, the smith, ran past, and they called out to him, "Hallo! master! whither away?"

He turned round as he ran, and, crying "Don't you know?" said something about Dusenschön which they did not catch and ran on. At his heels came a big boy, shoes in hand, who tried to slip past them in his stocking feet; but Pe Ontjes caught him by the scruff of his neck and said, "What is up, boy?"

Wrenching himself free, he cried out, "Dusenschön has had the treasure-ship dug up from the sandbank — they have found a million already!"

"Good heavens!" cried Pe Ontjes. "Do you hear that?"

Roaring and shouting came from the door of the public-house. The names "mayor" and "Dusenschön" rang out loudly; hurrahs resounded. People kept darting out of the little gabled houses, house doors banged, women shouted and ran up and down. Hagel, the lame shoemaker, came past on his chair calling out "A million!" as he drove on. An old woman, who had lost all her children, came out of her home, fastening her big, blue-checked apron as she went. "Oh! if only my children were here! We shall all be rich now!"

At the end of the harbour street they found Stiena Dusenschön standing, preening and pirouetting, under Rieke Thomson's window, smiling to herself. She was over seventy now. "Have you heard?" she cried in a loud chant.

"Poor mother!" said Kai Jans.

Rieke put her big head out of the window and, recognising them, said scornfully, "Well, Pe Ontjes, well, Kai Jans, do you believe now that Tjark Dusenschön will bring the Holyland to pass? I have always said he would."

"You have always been right," said Pe. "Where is Tjark Dusenschön? We have another laurel wreath for him."

"He's mocking at us!" cried Rieke in shrill excitement. "You two will never come to anything, never."

As they went along the streets and through the market-place people came streaming out of the taverns discussing with drunken voices whether they should go to the sandbank. Some determined to go to the club and salute Dusenschön.

"Come!" said Pe Ontjes.

"Oh, let me go home," said Kai. "I had rather not come to the club. I have looked up to all these people since I was a child, and I almost do still. It's horrible to see kings dragged into the mud."

"They're only beer and card kings. It will do you good," said Pe Ontjes. "Come!"

As they drew near the club they could already hear the loud roar of voices. They went in and opened the door and saw fifteen or twenty members sitting round the table amid clouds of smoke, with a big glass full in front of them. On the table and all round the room were all sorts of childish objects—cups, albums, stuffed birds, cheap painted statuettes, mixed up together in senseless confusion. Their effect was anything but beautiful. In the centre of the long table there was a huge

wooden pig with a wreath of sausages round his neck, which had been subscribed at a private and extraordinary meeting of the club, to do honour to the club and to Dusenschön. Above Tjark Dusenschön's chair hung the laurel wreath which he had brought from Berlin. He himself was no longer present. Daniel Peters, still an elegant figure, in spite of his sixty years — a mass of conceit from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet — was standing on a chair, the flow of his oratory interrupted by the noise. Doctor Winsing's coarse voice rose above the rest. "Come, mayor; you might just as well confess it now; did you and Suhlsen really get to Berlin at all?"

"How many stories has the factory, eh, Suhlsen?"

They all laughed and shouted, "Suhlsen says two, and the mayor says three!"

"They were seen in Hamburg on Thursday evening. When did they go to Berlin, in that case?"

"Where is Dusenschön?"

Daniel Peters stroked his beautiful, long moustache. "Gentlemen —"

"Go on!"

"Since we knew already what to think of Herr Dusenschön, the journey to Berlin was certainly superfluous. Nevertheless, I and my respected colleague did go to Berlin, in our supreme devotion to duty, and did see everything in all its details." He again thoughtfully stroked his moustache and said very earnestly, "Gentlemen, I am well aware that this room is not the official centre of Hilligenlei; the distinctions it confers are not the official distinctions, which will, gentlemen, be conferred in the chambers of our time-honoured town hall; but I merely state a universally recognized truth when I say that this room has often contained, as it does at this moment, the best intelligence of our ancient town. That being so, the distinctions which it has to confer are not to be despised."

"Good! go on!"

"I have to acquaint you, my honoured friends, that the Hilligenlei Club, founded March 30th, 1848, of which I have at this moment the honour to be president, has unanimously elected as an honorary member Mr. Dusenschön, owner of the sausage factory, which, be it said with confidence, will be the most important in Germany in the course of a year. I say

again, to express the feelings of the meeting, unanimously elected."

Thunders of applause and an outburst of shouts followed. "That is certainly magnificent!" "That is certainly an honour to the club!" "That is Hilligenlei all over—not a single carping voice!" They shook hands all round with every expression of serious satisfaction.

Lau, the corn merchant, had certainly chosen an inopportune moment. He pressed his way to the table, through the smoke and the up-lifted glasses, crying,

"Where's Dusen Schön gone with the money? What has he done with the money? I have been in Berlin—it's all a swindle."

They did not understand. The magistrate, who disgraced his high and noble office by drinking more than he ought every evening, folded his hands round his beaker and, rising to his feet, said with no expression in his bleared eyes, but an air of great importance, "Mr. Lau, our statutes do not permit people without introduction. . . ."

"What is the matter? What does he want?"

Pe Ontjes was in a towering rage.

"I have been in Berlin. It is an absolute swindle. Do you understand the word or no? There is no cardboard factory. It is all a cheat and a swindle. Do you understand that?"

Suhlsen got up heavily and stared at Pe Ontjes with horror in his eyes. Then suddenly he collapsed into his chair, his head striking against the table. The mayor's crimson face went as pale as death.

"Mayor, you —"

There was a great outburst of shouting. "What is up? Suhlsen! Mayor! You were there, though. Speak, man! though you go to hell for it. Did you see the factory or not? Have you been in Berlin or not?"

"Only to Hamburg!" said Daniel Peters, turning round and standing in an agony of indecision, his eyes fixed on the ground.

The young man who had met Pe Ontjes at the station pressed in at the door, followed by their companions. After them came the host, the waiters, people from the street. One of them, falling on the mayor, pushed him back and shouted in

his ear as if to wake him, "Where is the rascal? We are shamed before the country."

Doctor Winsing, who had never looked at a medical book since his examination, and made up for his total deficiency in either intelligence or wit by a plentiful supply of self-assurance, cried out in a loud voice, "We do not permit the use of such language concerning a member of our club, as long as the case is not proved."

"You do not permit?" said Pe Ontjes. "Who are you? We have been used to look up to you, to the magistrate, the students, the parson, who is here. But what are you, after all?" He did not know how to express his meaning.

Kai Jans went on: "The whole town, its men, women, and children, have looked up to you, the possessors of the dignity of office. All believed you really were something. As a matter of fact, you draw your salaries and perform your duties without intelligence or inspiration. You ought to be proud and open-eyed, men of light and leading in the town; you ought to make a pure and Holyland of it—that is your duty."

Old Suhlsen was carried out. One artisan after another came up to the mayor and reproached him, till the landlord led him away into the next room and closed the door behind him. For a long time he sat huddled together in the corner, looking up dully when anyone came near, and saying, "Shave off my beard; shave off my beard." He seemed to feel that his beard must go with his ruined vanity.

Pe Ontjes and Kai Jans went to look for Tjark Dusenschön. Kai wanted to turn aside when they reached the park. "Let me go home," he said. "I have seen enough trouble to-day and yesterday."

"You are to come," said Pe angrily; "we must settle with Tjark Dusenschön."

"I want to see no more," said Kai, in a broken-spirited voice. "I have seen all that is sad and hideous in the world already. Why should I see Tjark's face too?"

"Come! it will do you good after all your brooding."

Just as they were turning into Seiler Street a little, old-fashioned cart came along, and they saw in the moonlight that the driver, a harsh-looking peasant, turned to look sharply at them as they went by. They had gone some way down the street when Pe Ontjes said suddenly, "Do you know, that

peasant looked to me suspicious. Listen! Where is he going?"

They stood still to listen, and heard the cart rattle down the harbour street.

"Do you hear? He's driving down to the factory. Let's see where he stops."

They hurried down to the factory and found it lit up as usual, work proceeding inside, pigs squealing. They looked round them in astonishment. The cart must be somewhere. Then Kai perceived it on the road below the dyke, hidden by the dark wall that rose behind it. Going up to it, Pe looked up sharply and said in a low tone, "Whom are you waiting for, Bahne Voss of Krautstiel?"

"That's nobody's business!" said Bahne, laughing.

"Stay here, and don't utter a sound," said Pe softly, "or you will feel my fist on your jaw. Kai, go to the factory and see if he is there — you may drive him into my arms."

Kai went over to the shed and through all the half-dark rooms, looking for the office. Then, following the squealing of the pigs, he found himself in a long passage that ran down to the styes, and there, by the light of the moon, he could see a hugely tall man stumbling awkwardly, with bent back, after one of the pigs. He recognized Jeff Buhmann.

"What are you doing here?" he said. "What are you doing here? Do you run after the pig, and catch hold of its tail, and live in the shed?"

"Hallo!" said Jeff, wiping the sweat from his brow. "It's you, Kai!"

"Tell me, what is all this? Where is Tjark Dusen-schön?"

"Oh!" he said, breathless, in a voice of keen distress, "I don't understand it at all. I have been here three days, and I'm about done. My wife thinks that I am fishing for eels. He has no more pigs and no more money, I think, and he's searching for gold in the sandbank with his men."

"There's not a word of truth in it all," said Kai. "It's a swindle."

Jeff sat down heavily. "All a swindle?" he said. "All a swindle? Where is he, then?"

"We don't know — escaped, I expect."

"Kai, he is a wonderful man for all that — a wonderful

man. Far, far superior to you and Pe Ontjes. So it's all a swindle! My compliments to you, Kai!"

"Only tell me where he is!"

"An hour ago he was in the office. People came past shouting about the sandbank and some accident, and then he disappeared somewhere. I have always had a high opinion of him. I must say he gave me more satisfaction than any man I know."

"Come with me to Pe Ontjes."

Pe Ontjes stood by the cart, waiting in vain. Some people came past and, recognising his voice, shouted, "We've got him. We put him in the cart and brought him to the town hall, and took the money. It's in the Savings Bank again. We let him go."

"What sort of state of mind was he in?" asked Kai.

"Angry enough, as one might expect, otherwise quite unmoved. His only fear seemed to be of punishment. I expect he made his way on foot to the nearest station."

Pe Ontjes, Jeff, and Kai Jans made their way to the long house. "I must say," said Pe Ontjes, "that I am disappointed at not seeing him."

He went up to the house, and, finding Stiena Dusenschön's door open, went upstairs, only to descend again immediately, declaring, "The house is empty."

They returned to the street discussing where he could be. Jeff happened to look across to the smithy, and saw that the door, which was split, had been carefully closed. "Good Heavens!" he whispered. "I know where he is!" going up to the door.

There, in the moonlight pouring in through the western window, there sat, on the old, broken-down carriage that had once been Kissen's, and for which they had once made a lottery, there sat Tjark Dusenschön with Stiena, his old grandmother, by his side. Opposite them, on an overturned barrow, the mayor, Daniel Peters. Tjark was holding forth, his clear eyes shining.

Kai Jans addressed him in passionate words: "What are you going to do now? Tell me what you think about! In what a wretched state you must go out into the world!"

"Wretched!" said Tjark in astonishment, taking hold of

his imposing pocket-flaps with both hands. "You are really too stupid."

"Hit him in the face," said Pe Ontjes.

"That is madness, Pe Ontjes," said Jeff, seating himself on the anvil. "He cannot help it. His misfortune is that he confuses gross and net, and he did that as a boy."

"Do not forget," said Tjark Dusenschön, with calm indifference, "that I am an honorary member of the club."

"What does life mean to you?" asked Kai, greatly troubled. "What are your thoughts? What is your purpose in the world?"

"What do you mean?" said Tjark. "Don't be offended, Kai, but you are a fool. It is clear that one must take money when one can get it."

Afraid that the man would impose upon him again, Pe Ontjes said, "Come, Kai; let us go."

"What are you, though?" insisted Kai eagerly. "What is your motive? What is your purpose in life? Tell me, Tjark—you have some serious aim!"

Tjark looked at him with a gentle smiling, shaking his head. "Poor fellow," he said. "You are really troubled about me. What do I know of myself? Things amuse me." He listened. "It is quiet outside now. I must go. I didn't want to fall into the clutches of that gang."

When they came out again into the clear moonlight Kai said in a tone of unutterable weariness, "Let me go now, Pe Ontjes. I have seen misery enough."

"No!" said Pe shortly. "You must come with me. We must see how the town takes it. We must fight this thing through, Kai. Truth and Reality are our watchwords, and we must face whatever comes, however awful."

Returning to the park, they were met by crowds returning from the sandbank, raging, shouting, and laughing at the way in which they had been swindled there. Wild shouts rang, and people hurried to and fro on every side. From every house and street there was a ringing of bells. Pe Ontjes laughed.

"Don't laugh," said Kai Jans. "Is it a time for laughing when your native town is sunk to such depths of degradation?"

"What does Hilligenlei matter to me?" asked Pe Ontjes wildly. "Nothing matters except wife and children."

"Don't say that!" said Kai. "Don't say that! They are

our brothers and sisters. If we did not think that, we should fight like wild beasts."

"Brothers and sisters, indeed!"

A man came towards them in the moonlight from the chestnut avenue, in whom he recognized Pete Boje—come over from Hamburg to spend the half-day with his mother. He had taken Heinke to stay with Anna, that she might not be alone on such a tumultuous night, and was now on his way to the station to catch the night train back to Hamburg. He knew all that had happened, and said, "In the future one will hardly dare to say that one comes from Hilligenlei," then walked by their side in silence to the station.

"If that were all!" said Kai Jans, "but just look at all these people!"

Some hundred or two hundred men were running to the station from all directions. One could hear the tread of many feet and the sound of hideous oaths, mixed with coarse, drunken laughter.

"Listen to their laughter!" said Kai. "They don't know that they are so many madmen!"

Pete Boje shrugged his shoulders and said with an air of cold indifference, "We are all that, Kai. How should we be anything else?"

"But surely you have always been happy—always known what you wanted," said Kai.

Pete gave a quick laugh. "Yes! I was young and fresh. I found joy in climbing upwards. But since I have got to the top—The endless rush in our yard, day in, day out; trying an improvement to-day, only to throw it aside to-morrow for a better; getting through more business than other firms and other nations; the workmen dissatisfied; some people always tale-bearing, others struggling to get on—and so every day and all day. The whole thing is so aimless."

They had got nearly to the station. Huge crowds of men stood collected in the shadow of the coalsheds, waiting silently to attack Tjark Dusenschön or the mayor on their way to the station.

"Do you know, though," said Pete, "there are some people who are happy."

"Where?" said Kai, turning round upon him swiftly.

"People with a fixed idea. You must become a man with a

fixed idea, and then you will be happy. In the asylums you will find men who are happy — men with happy, fixed ideas, and the members of peculiar sects! I have seen it in our works and in London. For example, the Salvation Army people are happy. That's it! Just find a fixed idea, and you will be happy."

"Yes!" said Kai, his eyes burning. "Yes, you are right. We are not very far from the time when men were like dumb animals. We don't live by reason now — only by fancies and fixed ideas. Oh, Pete, how I wish I had such a fixed idea — one that would apply to all mankind — a big, glorious idea — that would bring us nearer to light and knowledge."

"Good night!" said Pete Boje with a laugh. He shook hands and left them.

"Look! look!" said Pe Ontjes. A crowd of drunken citizens had brought the wooden pig from the club table and fastened it to a pole, and were now carrying it, with loud groans, through the peaceful silence of the lovely moonshine. Some were men with grey heads, some were members of the club. The people who had been standing in the shadow of the sheds now came forward, one by one, and joined them. The great, noisy crowd filled the square.

"Look!" said Pe Ontjes, waving his hand towards them. "There is your Hilligenlei. That's what its people are like. That's what humanity is like. There it is!"

"Dear Pe Ontjes," said Kai in a strange voice, and catching hold of his arm as if to prevent himself from falling, "you are a simple fellow, but from your childhood — you have had a firm hold on life —"

"Boyl!" said Lau in some embarrassment. "I — a firm hold? I tell you Anna Boje and I are driven back and forwards by love and anger. Like everyone else, we are without rudder or compass to guide us."

Kai Jans let fall his arm, and said in a spiritless voice that betrayed the sick horror of his soul, "No one knows anything. There is no Holyland, no God. All, all is confusion!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

NEXT morning Pe Ontjes went and told Heinke of Kai Jans' arrival, and said, promising her an antique, gold ornament belonging to his mother, "You are a pretty girl and a clever one, and his friend. I'm not clever enough for him, and Anna is so readily unjust. You go and comfort him."

She thought, "How fortunate it should just happen that the other has a month's holiday, and is over the hills and far away. I can give myself up to the poor, dear man. Consolation comes easily to me, for I am so happy. Oh, dear, dear Peterkin!"

So she went to Mrs. Lau and obtained immediate possession of the ornament, picked a red carnation in the garden and put it in her belt, and then made her way to the long house.

He was sitting at the round table at which all the Jans children had been christened, eaten their meals, and done their lessons, gazing in a brown study out across the sea.

"Let us go upon the dyke," she said. He got up and shook her by the hand. "I am a poor companion for you, child!"

"Sh!" she said. "Pe Ontjes has told me all about it. Come!"

On top of the long pier that ran right out to sea she slipped her arm through his with a movement of confiding affection and walked so by his side. The west wind blew in their faces, blowing back her dress. The sun shone on the left.

"Do you remember, when you were in the top form you told me once that your ancestors came from the Marcomanni? First they dwelt up there on the windy hilltops, and then came down into the fens and became farmers."

"They ended by being workmen in Hilligenlei. The last of the line was a good-for-nothing dreamer with neither land, nor rights, nor position in his home."

Dropping his arm, she pulled off her jacket, with her sparkling eyes on him.

"You have no place in your home? Is there anything more beautiful in your home than a beautiful girl? You have a place *here*! Do you think it is easy to live in this place and be of it? Would you be any better if the old farmers bowed before you, and the tower of Hilligenlei saluted you?"

He looked at her, amazement in his eyes. "How you have changed! — you have become so sweet and gentle!"

"Ah! Peterkin!" thought she.

The sun shone and the wind blew. They walked out into the glittering grey sea, and she pressed his arm tenderly against her yielding side.

"I have put on my best frock! do you see that? I have, you see, my flower and my ornament — all to give you pleasure."

He looked at her again, wonderingly. "Your mouth used to be a shade too small," he said, "but now it has grown strong and wide. And your eyes are darker and softer than they were. They used to be like two fair-haired girls of ten years old playing ball in the wind; but now there is a young mother playing with her child."

"Peterkin's love has done that," she thought. "Sit still, my soul."

"What are you saying?" she said aloud, "I am twenty-two now, that's what it is."

"Do you know," he said, smiling bitterly at himself, "when I was a young student and you were still a child there was a time when I cherished the secret hope that you would one day be my wife. Thank Heaven I let that dream go; thank Heaven we are friends, and no more. What a long engagement that would have been! What a gloomy bridegroom! Finally, he would have said, 'I am sorry, Heinke Boje, but I have no bread, and no thoughts for you.'"

"Don't be sad," she said.

"Over thirty," he said, "and still I don't know whether there is a place where I can be of use in the world. God takes the others by the hand and leads them to some field or other, be it ever so small, saying, 'Build thy house there, plant thy garden there.' But He holds me for a fool. For me He has no field. He condemns me to be a huntsman — a lost huntsman who seeks through brush and briar and fen a splendid, fabulous beast."

Her spirits sank, and she turned round in silence, thinking, "I have played badly to-day."

When they reached the rushing sluice she gave him her hand and said with trembling lips, "You are more to me than my mother, my brothers, and my sister. I could not be glad if you were not happy, whatever fortune came to me. I shall come again to-morrow, and go on coming, until you laugh again." Her eyes suddenly filled with tears. She turned and went away.

The next day she returned in the same blue dress and with the red carnation, and again walked along the dyke with him out to sea. The sea lay beneath them clad in her grey-green garment, a band of light across her breast. Field after field extended, covered with dark-green grass and bright cornfields, and beyond, in the distance, shady farms and villages. Inland the land rose gently, its hillocks covered with meadows, woods, and villages.

"Look!" she said, looking round her. "How beautiful your home is. Can you find no joy in being a child of this land, where, for hundreds of years, so many brave deeds have been done? You have youth and intelligence and health. Your home and your youth should teach you to seek bravely for some good deed to do."

"Two years ago," he said thoughtfully, "I told you that I had begun to work. I wanted to write a book to show how a new current was moving in our days — a morning breeze was astir — that everywhere there was a longing for progress, a desire for change, a courageous spirit of improvement, a hunger for knowledge and righteousness. I wanted to discover the direction of this current to see what sails we ought to set and how we ought to steer — we who watch on shore. I dreamed of singing the German renaissance. I had begun to work hard at it, full of joy in my task, and hoping to find peace in it. Then came the strike. I had to go hither and thither, helping and speaking, and the envy, malice, and uncharitableness that filled the hearts of the men I worked with rose and crushed me like the powers of darkness. Then came the horrible death of the two boys, and yesterday my home turned into a *Bedlam*."

"Heinke, I know now that this trifling change and improvement and progress is meaningless and valueless. It is nothing."

It will come to nothing, because the whole basis of our lives is false — because we have no real standard of values, no real religion. Heinke, we lack a pure and sound belief — a belief that can lead us on like a herald of light and joy — a belief which all brave and thoughtful men can accept. Look! if we had such a belief everything else would follow of itself. It is there, at the foundation of our life, in our belief, that our renaissance must begin.

"But where is one to find this new belief? None can say where it is. The Almighty does not give it to us. It is awful to pray to God, 'Lord show it me, give it to me! I and my people must perish else, with bleeding hearts' and to feel Him looking down with those calm eyes, saying nothing, His eyes always calm — it is awful. Only to you can I speak of this; you stand to me for all that is dear and pure in life."

The eyes she raised to his were full of tears. "Oh!" she thought, "how I long to kiss his hands, his eyes."

"Do not weep," he said; "be glad that you have nothing to do with me."

She turned and walked in silence by his side. In her youth she did not know what to say to him. When she parted from him she said,

"Do you remember the fruits you brought me from the South Sea? It was the greatest event in my youth. And how you used to help me with my exercises? You were always good to me, and that is why you are nearer to me than my mother and my brothers and sister, and why I cannot rest until you are glad."

In the night she lay awake till midnight, brooding and praying for help. And her prayers were passionate, for she came of a family that seldom prayed, only in extremity, and then with all their hearts.

In the morning, before the air had lost its earliest freshness, she came again. He met her at the door, and they went on together. The wind blew shrill and high. The morning sun shone above the distant line of wood across from the hill of Wotan. And there, on the hill of Wotan, a mountain regarded as sacred by their ancestors, there, in the hollow between the low oak-trees and the barrows of the Huns, there sat, there in the morning brightness, a messenger from Him whom one can neither name nor comprehend. Bending forward with his

shining feet in the heather, he bent his brilliant eyes on the two mortals clearly outlined against the glimmering sea as they walked along the dyke. His eyes were as sharp as arrows that burn in their flight.

They went silently side by side; the wind blew back her dress, outlining her figure. A pair of swallows flew down from the hills—flew close by their knees. She stretched out her hand to catch them, and gave a faint cry, saying in the same breath, as if some outer force compelled her. You said, yesterday, that the great need of our people and our time was a Holyland on which to take their stand, and from it draw a sure and inward joy of will and life. Tell me, now—has there ever been a man in the world who had his stand on such a Holyland, and was, therefore, joyful, and reaped a good harvest?"

He stood still, regarding her. "Yes," he said; "I think the Saviour did so."

"Yes," she said, "but I think He did so not as a simple man, but by His divine power."

"Ah, child!" he said sadly. "Who knows? Soon after His death His true image was painted over, decked out with gold, and it has gone on so. There are scholars, indeed, who have laboured diligently for more than a century to discover the true picture under all the paint with which it is overlaid, and especially in the last twenty years they have succeeded to a considerable extent. I know most of their investigations. But as far as I can see they have not arrived at any certainty yet." He looked at the ground, deep in thought, and then said hesitatingly, "When I was a parson I gloried in His wisdom and goodness, and preached about that. I thought it did not matter whether He was an immortal spirit or a simple man. And it is indifferent—no! no! it is not indifferent—no!"

The swallows flew quickly by, with their sweet chirp, close to Heinke's knee. She tried to catch them; then, raising her fair head, she cried,

"*That* ought to be indifferent? *That*? No! there is nothing in the whole world more necessary than that there should be certainty in this. As long as there is no certainty the Holyland is an insecure, unstable possession, men's opinions veer restlessly from one extreme to the other, and every sort of dogma and superstition sways the minds of men. There is nothing in the

whole world more necessary than that there should be certainty as to the nature of the Saviour."

He listened restlessly and then said slowly, as if not sure of himself, "Yes, yes; I think you are right. If it were possible," he went on, painfully working out his thoughts, "if it were possible to find His real life beneath all the overlay, and it were proved that He was a man, a mere man, and one could penetrate into the depths of His soul and make them visible, the Holyland on which He took His stand, and by which He reaped such a magnificent harvest — then, yes! then one could say, 'Come hither! all ye people. Look! this was a man — a man like ourselves, who stood in Holyland, and was joyous and happy. Come hither, all ye people. We will take our stand on this Holyland and build for the new birth of our people!' . . . But no, it won't do! The authorities are not sufficient. I do not believe that it is possible to understand His soul, His life, now. No, I do not believe it. Therefore the Church will always rule and error with it."

The swallows flew close to her knee with their soft chirping. She bent down and held out her hand to catch them, and they eluded her shyly. She spoke as if some power outside herself compelled her, and her grey eyes shone.

"You say that many people have worked at it, and that *now*, now, important results have been established? Kai Jans, try! Go through their investigations with your child's eyes and the passion of your eager heart. Paint a picture of the Saviour."

He beat his breast. "I?" he said. "I, a poor, unlearned creature?"

"It must be someone like you who does it," she said, "a poor, unlearned creature. Has your hard, struggling youth taught you to see the sorrows of human life with your own eyes and your father's? God has given you wonderful eyes; they reveal that from your childhood you have seen men and things naked as they are. Or are you frightened of what people will say?"

He shook his head quickly. "I have long ago learned not to care what people think of me. But I tell you it is a fearfully difficult task. To make that long ago, distant, wondrous Being live again! Heaven help me, how can I do it?"

She took his arm and looked into his face with her beautiful,

earnest eyes. "Try! Begin to-morrow morning! You may succeed or not. Be one of the many who stand ready to help humanity according to their strength, until a mightier hand comes to take the wheel. Begin to-morrow, Kai! Search for Hilligenlei!"

They had come to a standstill; she held and shook his hands. "Help, Kai! Do your part in the new birth of your people, and be not afraid!"

"If you wish it," he said, breathing hard, "I will try. You have a sweet, wonderful power over me. I feel compelled as by an angel from Heaven."

She let his hands go, and, calling to the swallows, went back with them to Hilligenlei.

"Look!" she said, "do you see that white cloud over by the Hill of Wotan — how wonderfully it moves, as if it were alive."

He turned round and looked at the world spread out before him, and at her. She walked on calmly, her beautiful, quiet eyes gazing over the hills.

"You are the queen of it all," he said.

"Of course," she said. "Sea and sky and heath and hill cannot do what I have just done." She turned round. "Where are my swallows?"

"They have helped you well," he said, "and now they have flown away. You're a silly."

"Go home and work!" she said, nodding to him. "I must go to my work too."

CHAPTER XXV.

AND so, with unquiet and tremulous heart, Kai Jans began in the blue-walled room in the long house to search the Gospel for Hilligenlei. Every afternoon Heinke came in her short blue cashmere dress and knocked at the window, and he would look up from his book quite dazed, as if some strange monster, crawled up from the harbour, was pressing its forehead against the window. Then he went out and walked silently by her side; even then his thoughts were in his work.

If she asked how he was getting on he shook his head, saying, "My friend has sent me all the books that have appeared on the subject within the last ten years, most of them by professors at the German Universities. I know most of them already. . . . It's a tremendous undertaking; I can hardly believe that any certainty will come of it. And yet I am grateful to you for having set me to work at it. Even if I cannot make the holy, royal spring bubble up again — even if it is too deeply sunk and choked — I can yet find joy in working in the sacred grove that has grown up around it in the course of time."

"There," said she, "there, Heinke Boje!" She took his arm and told him how, as a child, she had wanted to bring him flowers and had not dared. "Now I have brought you a splendid flower," and she told him of her daily doings.

Of one thing, however, she told him not a word; she did not tell him that all through the summer she had sat every evening on a man's knee, and that now, every other day, she sat on the edge of her bed, as all the Bojes did, to read a letter from that man, with sparkling eyes and glowing cheeks.

Things went on so for three weeks.

One clear day in September, towards the end of the fourth week, she found him, when she came along the dyke and knocked at the window, not, as usual, buried in his books, but standing gazing out across the sea with a strange calm in his eyes. He came out at once eagerly, and, taking her arm, said

with marked excitement, "Dear, it is growing plain. . . . There is no doubt about it. I can't tell you how strangely I feel. . . . It gets clearer and clearer; it is the life of a man, wonderfully deep, wonderfully pure, wonderfully brave, but the life of a man. It is all infinitely moving from beginning to end: his faith, his goodness, his proud longing for the victory he could not win, his mistakes, his death; but I don't think there is anything superhuman in it. It is a drama, and angels experience no drama. Let us go out to sea; I will try to tell you some of it. You must ask me if I say anything strange, and so it will all be clearer to me. Oh, Heinke! you see, there is no one to whom I can talk of this."

So he began, and she listened attentively. Often he paused to remark that links were still missing here or there; often her simple questions gave him pause and showed him that his conclusions had been too hastily formed.

So it went on, day after day. It was all new and strange to her, and filled her with a glad astonishment.

"I am not going to write anything yet," he said. "I must think it all out clearly and simply; simplicity is the first essential in religion of all things. I shall represent Him entirely from the historical point of view, keeping close to the original sources, only supplying the very briefest connection where they fail. Every word must be three times revised."

At the beginning of September he tried to begin to write, but all kinds of difficulties presented themselves. Once more he had to spend long days in searching the original sources and the books of the more recent investigators. This lasted for weeks, during which he wrote down nothing.

The weather being rainy he took his walk on the dyke alone; when she came in the evening she found him quiet and thoughtful. While she was there his father would return from work, and after eating his supper, as usual, sitting by the kitchen fire, came in and sat with them, smoking his pipe. Still deep in thought, Kai Jans only half heard the old man's tale of human life, and his eyes wandered to the beautiful, earnest face of the girl beside him.

After a hard day's work a man sits down by the edge of the calm pond in the forest and refreshes himself in the silence with gazing in the beautiful mirror, and hearing the high oaks murmuring in the breeze of all that had happened in the day.

And the young woman looked at him and thought calmly, "What a dear, serious man he is become; I love him more and more. If I did not love the other so dearly it would be an agony to me that he does not want me; to be loved by him would be inexpressibly joyful. But now he is my friend, and I am happy."

But the further he penetrated into that wondrous life, the more difficult became each decision, and his soul grew heavier and heavier. Added to it all came day after day of gloomy rain. He was tortured by the fear lest his work might pain many good people and might send those of coarser mould, restrained by some secret fear of the Son of God, headlong into evil courses.

At times, and more especially at night, when incessant work and anxiety kept him awake, and rain and wind beat mercilessly against his window, distrust and terror assailed him fiercely. "You are wrong, you are wrong. He was eternal, divine, a supernatural being. Woe to you! you are committing mortal sin!" In the middle of the night he seemed to hear it. "Arise! the two greatest men of thy race are waiting at thy door to speak with thee. . . . Look at Luther's angry face. 'Does thy belief step over me like a step on the ladder?'" "Yes, it does." And lo, who is that behind Martin Luther? The old man from Weimar himself, mocking at thee. "Don't trouble yourself! you can never weld together those discordant elements, Christianity and the German race!" "Yes, I shall."

Then when morning came, grey and sunless, he shrank from his work, and, casting aside his pen, went out.

There on the dyke, with the boisterous wind blowing gloomily around him and the rain beating heavily against him, he fought the old fight again, wrestling in speech with God. "Thou knowest I have sought Thee and Thy Holyland from my childhood, and Thou, therefore, hast laid upon me immeasurable sorrow. Where for me has been the joyousness of youth? Thou knowest how it has tortured me all my days that for two hundred years the Church has reviled the heroes, the poets, the pioneers among my race; how, because 'they believed in no Saviour, because they were not Christians,' they were thrust aside from Thee. . . . Can I endure it? . . . Thou knowest how it has tortured me all my days that all those of my race that seek for progress, artisans, sailors, merchants, teachers,

artists, all those whose minds are refreshed by the breath of wisdom, all those who are strong and eager, have fallen away from the beliefs of the Church, and therefore stand in the midst of the struggle of human existence without any belief, that is, without any rest for their feet. . . . Can I endure it? Thou knowest that I love Thee as truly as those that hold the old belief, that I do not wish to destroy and have no joy in destruction, but would rather build, and, as far as my poor strength permits, will build a new house of belief on the old holy ground; a house even be it only a log hut at first, in which those among my people who are simple and serious and child-like of heart may dwell and find their happiness in dwelling there. And, therefore, I am daring to do what I do. If Thou forbiddest me, I shall not listen."

When he came home again he had so far recovered his spirits as to continue step by step to follow the course of the holy hero's life. In the evening he sat under the oak trees, by the deep pond in the forest, saying no word of what lay between his soul and God alone.

At last there came a lovely sunny September morning, a Friday; a day when all through the countryside one could see the flash of the sickle and the wheat set up in beauteous sheaves; a day when he reached the end of his researches and at last saw the way that led, high and clear, into the future of mankind. Now he could begin to write all he saw as a living thing. And he drew a deep breath.

When she came he rose up and said, laughing, "I feel so light-hearted and joyous! All the ghosts have gone!"

She looked at him with merry eyes. "You look like the young farmers who get up ever so early at this season and go out to the cornfield they are going to reap."

"And you!" he said, with beaming looks, "what has come over you? Do you think my eyes are blind to all beauty? Now . . . now I have found my sight, I can see what I used to see in the days when I was a student in Berlin."

A kind of terror smote her, and she made no reply.

"Come," he said, "let's go a long, long walk together — quite alone. What is it, child? You can't be surprised at my looking at you! Do you know, life has become quite clear to me."

"You mustn't look at me like that," she said, and her voice quivered.

He took her and laughed out gaily, walking close by her side. "And why mayn't I? You're no longer in the dream where womanhood and girlhood meet. This year has made you a woman, and such a woman!"

She laid her two hands on his and implored him with ill-concealed anxiety, "Dear boy, please . . . please don't talk to me so."

He did not see the anxiety—he only saw the friendship and the love shining in her lovely eyes, and kissed her restraining hands, laughing in his exaltation of spirits. Then, looking at her hand, he kissed it again and said, his heart bounding with irrepressible joyousness, "For seven years I have sat brooding, brooding on the hill of sorrow, till at last the most lovely maiden in the land came and smote the hill with her echoing voice, and I leapt to my feet and beheld the world and the sun and the kingdom of Heaven." He took her by the shoulders, and, looking into her face, said, "Look at me . . . look at me. . . . How beautiful you are!"

She cried out in pain, "Dear Kai . . . don't talk so! I cannot, cannot tell you."

But his whole heart was singing a joyful carol, and he did not hear the trouble in her voice. "Come, let us go up to the heights by the quiet way through the fields. There shall be nothing but joy to-day! To-morrow I will begin to sing the song of the Saviour, such as no man yet has sung. . . . Up till now you have always talked and I said nothing; a tiresome, speechless lover I have been to you. Poor child, you have never had any pleasure from me. Have I ever told you how beautifully you walk? like a young queen who has just been anointed. Have I ever told you how beautifully you carry your shoulders? as if there sat a dove on each, whom you cradled as you went. Have I ever told you how beautiful your hair is? it must be wonderful when it lies over your white shoulders. Yes, yes, you will have a lover to rejoice in you, one who is no dreamer."

All the hardness, all the reserve seemed wiped out of his face, and all the sorrow. When the windows of a house that has long stood closed and silent are cleansed and opened, and the door cast wide, then a crowd of pretty children stream

out laughing into the lovely garden: so from his eyes, dear and true, there shone intelligence and beauty, such a flood of love and goodness pouring upon her that she could not turn away her eyes.

"How different you are!" she said. "Don't talk to me so! Please, please, Kai, don't talk so — please."

"I am just what I have always been, Heinke," he said, in a voice of tender sympathy, stroking her hands; "only I have been sick and sorry for a long time and you have had to suffer with me. Now I am well again. You must not be afraid, my dear, because it all comes out at once, in a rush."

"Dear!" she said, "dear one!" She covered her face with her hands and groaned inwardly, "I *cannot* tell him . . . no, I cannot. This is the first happy day in his life!"

"Smile at me! isn't it like a fairy tale? Here am I, a poor little working man, walking along the dyke with the fairest maiden in all the land by my side! Whither? Whither? Let us take the grassy path and we shall be on the top in half an hour. There is no one there; we can be together for hours. I will find a place in the wood and there kneel before you and look at you, only look at you, no more, for hour after hour. There is no greater pleasure — oh, you have such a delicate white face! you dainty white maid of Holstein!"

She tried to say to him, "I can't, Kai . . . I can't. . . . I am promised to another. . . . I love another beyond everything," but the words would not come; she could not say it. Such happiness beamed in his eyes; the beating of his heart made his voice tremble. "Let him be happy for one day . . . poor, precious man. It is so delightful to see him happy. How his love burns, how his eyes shine. He shall have my hands, both my hands . . . but no more. . . . I cannot let him do anything more."

So she walked by his side on the green grass, through the wide, rich meadowland, her heart torn by uneasy apprehension.

He was as happy as a boy. He laughed and played with her hands, then let them fall to pick the flowers growing at the edge of the ditch, which he fastened in her hair and bosom, and a daisy garland round her waist. She let him do his will, thinking first in pain, "O misery," then in sweet content, "The dear man. He shall have my hands, both my hands," and she slipped her hands into his, thinking, "No more."

Half an hour later they had reached the deepest solitude of the wood. She, still adorned with her flowers, sat on the edge of a ruinous old wall, while he knelt before her, with his arms round her, gazing up into her face in unutterable rapture, and imploring her again and again, "Give me your lips." Again and again she bent down to him and kissed him till he talked like one possessed. With overwhelming suddenness he saw spread out before his eyes the glory of the world, with its sure and dazzling hope for himself and all humanity, and now a pure and lovely woman was in his arms.

Clouds blew over the wood from the east; the first heavy drops fell through the sultry air, audible on the foliage of the trees. "I can never gaze enough at you. I shall never rise again. I am so at rest, so happy; for the first time in my life I am filled with happiness and peace. . . . Oh, your kisses . . . it comes to you by nature, but I must learn from you how to kiss."

"Kai, Kai, no more. Dear one, no more to-day. To-morrow — oh, to-morrow — no more now!"

"Yes, to-day and to-morrow and every day. I am the most blissful man in the world. I have often wondered why all other men seemed so gay and peaceful and serene, and I alone must always suffer, must bear the pain of want of money, of trouble at home, of continual brooding. But now I am glad of it; now that I have found happiness I can feel the deeper bliss and thankfulness. . . . Reverent I have always been, dear, you know that; since I was a child I have always looked up with a humble heart to the mysterious Ruler of the World, but never did I feel such profound reverence as to-day, when I recognize His mysterious hand in the most beautiful of created things. Yes . . . now I can tell the story of the Saviour. He grew up from the earth and was the most beautiful of the children of men; more beautiful even than you!"

She sat looking at him and holding his two hands in her lap. The sweetness of his love swept over her, as wave after wave breaks over a vessel lying stranded on its side, until it is altogether broken and washed away. "He has the elder right; from my childhood he has been my friend. I have been wrong. I thought he was only a dreamer and loved me not; I never knew how I had secretly grown to love him. Never before have I seen this new, beautiful side of him. How beautiful

his hard face and his bright eyes are. . . . Alas! what am I to do? What am I doing? Let me go, Kai . . . Kai, don't—don't kiss me any more."

"Give me your lips. I shall not sleep to-night if I have lost one kiss."

"It's beginning to rain, Kai. . . . We must go home."

"Let it rain, Heinke, let it rain; it will bring nothing but blessings on your dear fair head."

She bent down to him with a gesture of passionate abandonment and kissed him again and again, her heart rent in twain. "Oh, if *he* could know and behold this! He has given to me all the purity of his youth, and now I am sitting here with another. Oh, is it possible. . . . I am a wretched creature. . . . Oh, I must leave him and turn to this one. . . . I have never known how much I loved him. . . . No, no. I cannot leave him; he would despise and hate me, and that would kill me. Oh, unhappy that I am, how dear his eyes are; they are to blame. I will look at them no more." She covered her eyes with her hands and groaned aloud, "Don't kiss me any more . . . it's raining so. . . . Come, dear Kai, I mustn't do it any more—I mustn't."

He sprang to his feet, and, sitting by her side, put his arms round her. "Let it rain—only give me your lips . . . why are they so red, why do they kiss so burningly? Oh, your mouth is wonderful; your eyes are inexpressibly sweet. . . . It is strange that your cheeks do not burn."

"You must kiss them, Kai, then they too will burn. Come, dear, dear one, come to me." She turned to him and kissed him without ceasing on cheek and mouth. Her hair had become loose, and she undid it and spread the soft waves, on which the rain fell in heavy drops, all over him. Her breath came hard and her whole body trembled. "I must do what I am doing," she thought, "God forgive me. To-morrow I will tell him—to-day is a day of laughter and tears, kisses and gnashing of teeth. Mother was right when she said, 'You Bojes will all suffer because of your proud, passionate hearts.' Come to me, Kai; to-day all shall be given you. Come . . . there . . . now. Kiss me, kiss me. Your kisses are dear and pure."

The heavy summer rain wet her thin dress so that it clung close to her form; he passed his hand over her, kissing the wet

garment and praising the beauty of her limbs in eager, trembling words. So they sat at the edge of the wood under the young beeches, he in happiness, she with tortured conscience, till the dusk came.

Then they rose and went down from the heights of the valley, turning into the way that led to Hilligenlei. It was an ancient way, that had been tramped by all kinds of feet, and now these two passed along it. He spoke of the happiness of to-morrow, she said nothing of the misery of to-morrow.

She came home and went up into her room. Then, ringing her hands, she quickly changed her clothes, and then, throwing herself on her bed, stared out into the darkness. Her mother came in and said that she was going to spend the evening with Anna, but she made no answer.

She cried aloud, over and over again, without her own knowledge, "What am I to do?" For a time it seemed clear that Kai Jans had the elder claim. Then she saw the other, alone and unhappy, with all his life the bitter feeling in his heart, "That which was most sacred has betrayed you." . . . Then she resolved to write to Kai and tell him, "I cannot; I am promised to another," but then she heard his misery break forth in a loud cry. She could come to no conclusion, and wandered all over the house seeking for a room where she could leave her sorrow on the other side of the threshold.

At last, she could not have said how, she found herself in the gable room. There, as if compelled by some might stronger than her own, she fell suddenly on to her knees by the table where they had sat together, first looking at the pictures, afterwards she sitting on his knee. Then her tears came at last. She wept aloud, stroking the table-cloth and the arm of the chair with her hand, and kissing them as she spoke to him. "My true love, my dear, dear one, listen a moment. I cannot live and know you alone and sorrowful. Ah, my dear, how quickly you caught me, how fast you held me, how you trusted me, how good and dear you were! You did not ask how it stood with soul and body; you trusted wholly in my goodness. You laid your pure young manhood at my feet. . . . Oh, come to me, come. . . . I long to show you how I love you." She wept and stroked the table-cloth, and gradually became calmer. Her tears ceased and things became clear to her.

She lit the lamp, and, sitting down at his desk, wrote a short

letter to Kai Jans, telling him of her engagement and how she had not been able to tell him of it. Now she must tell him that, and tell him she could not leave her betrothed; it would embitter his whole life, and her conscience would never cease to torment her. "Kai, I cannot do it. . . . I am alone in the house and I implore you, come and let me comfort you and be strong; I cannot bear to see your despair."

Half an hour later, as she stood with beating heart by the table in the lower room, listening to every step that passed in the street, he came.

"Kai," she said, stretching her hands out to him in entreaty, "I could not have acted differently . . . to-day. You were so happy, you carried me off my feet; your love came so suddenly and was so sweet. Oh, Kai, forgive me; be strong. I cannot, cannot desert him."

Pale as death, he could not utter a word. She sank down on the sofa and wept bitterly, her arms on the table in front of her. "Oh, poor, dear one. I cannot, I cannot. Oh, don't look at me in such despair. Oh, what misery everywhere."

He sat down opposite to her and asked her in a voice of utter dejection how she had got to know the other, how long they had been together, what their relations were, and so forth. With outstretched arms and her hands folded on the table, the tears streaming from her eyes as she looked at him, she answered each of his questions as if replying to a judge.

At last she cried, weeping bitterly, "It is impossible for me to leave him; I should ruin his life, and that would make me miserable too. His heart is mine, wholly, and mine his. I love you, too, very much; I love you terribly . . . how much I did not know . . . but I must conquer it."

"That's the end, then," said he. "It is my fate, and no one can contend with fate. There only remains the question of what I am to do with my life."

His utter wretchedness appalled her and she cried aloud, sinking back in the chair and stretching out her hands to him. "I implore you to be strong. I love you so. Oh, Kai, be my dear friend. Kai, some day, perhaps, a terrible sorrow will come to me or to my children. . . . Who will help me then? Oh, dear one, do not turn from me in anger. . . . I cannot bear it."

He bent over her and stroked her hair. "I am not angry

with you; far, far from that. It is our fate. Be not afraid. I am a man; I can see to it that I hold my head upright. I have my old father and your dear friendship still. There . . . there . . . don't cry so. . . . Now let me go."

She held his hands fast, weeping sore. "I will think all night what I can do for you; all my life I will try to find a way to make you glad. It would have made me so happy to have been your wife, so happy. He knows of you, how dear you are to me, how good. I have told him a great deal about you, and I shall tell my children. Kai, have pity on me; be brave and do not ruin my life and his."

He looked down upon her and stroked her lovely, fair hair again and again without saying a word, with eyes that seemed to say "How strange it is; how sacred!" Then he went away.

He went home to the little blue room that opened from the kitchen, where he had slept since he was a child, and lay long unconscious on his bed, without stirring. He was aroused by what seemed to be the sound of a deep voice, saying clearly, "Did you think you could tell the Saviour's story with laughter in your heart?" He covered his face with his hands and wept.

The next day he sent her a brief note, in which he begged her not to come to him for the present; he could not bear to see her. After finishing his work he should go away. He had heard from his old friend that he was sailing for Cape Town at the end of the month, and probably he would accompany him. He should be glad to have an opportunity of getting to know the man she loved.

A week later Peter Volquardsen returned, and, having heard everything from Heinke, went over in the evening and talked things over with Kai. He told him of his own quiet, peaceful childhood, sheltered by the care of wise and thoughtful parents; of his acquaintance with a splendid and cultured man, who had brought into his life the purifying influences of art. All his life had been ordered and wisely counselled. His mother had taught him to know the great mysteries of life, its inner secrets; his father and his elder brothers had taught him the ways of the world. He had gone through life as through a garden, beautiful in its unclouded peace, without trouble or

doubt, guarded to the right and the left by the fair gifts of art; and one day he had come on his way upon the most precious thing of all, more to him than all that art could give — Heinke Boje. He related all this with shining eyes in his clear, straightforward way; at the end he took Kai Jans' arm and said, "I know that your life has been different."

Then Kai told him the story of his own life; in a quiet, emotionless voice he told him his earliest recollection was that his little mother had no money in the house, that she used to read English novels, and the only pictures he ever saw were Berlin fashion plates and the hideous paintings in church. He described the day when his eldest sister had come home and knelt before her mother on the ground; the time he had spent in learning from Heine Wulk how to be a wind-bag; then his wretchedness on the *Clara* and the confused experiences on the *Gude Wife*, when his hand was injured, and he used to think constantly, "You are no use for anything; jump overboard." Then came the grammar school, the sensation of ill-fitting clothes and heavy boots, and the weariness of giving lessons; the feeling, "Your father is a strange, vague sort of man;" then his poverty-stricken student days. Student days! when hungry eyes catch stolen glimpses of the range and variety of life; when one strives blindly in the mighty stream of existence and the only pleasure lies in friendships with young men in happier circumstances and occasional glances from a girl's friendly eyes.

Then with manhood came the time of gloomy, puzzled brooding, when his soul seemed oppressed by leaden clouds that weighed upon it, when all round was anxious, impenetrable darkness and for long no light. Then at last, when the darkness became hideous, came the light! . . . yes . . . and with the light came knowledge of the truth and beauty by his side. He had known her from a child; he had a claim; at least, he had helped her soul and character to grow. He thought she belonged to him . . . oh, how dear, how beautiful she is . . . how beautiful and dear!

Thus they began, each speaking of himself; then they turned to wide and serious problems, and it soon proved that there was much sympathy in spite of all differences in temperament and circumstances. They parted with the feeling that they could be friends.

A week later Heinke herself came, in spite of his request. With a shy gesture of unspeakable tenderness she begged him to walk a little way with her. In reply to her question he told her that he had begun his description of the life of Jesus, and was painfully making progress with it; he hoped to complete it in about five weeks.

Soon he made her turn back. She saw that he spoke with difficulty, his face was pale and his eyes fixed on the path. She asked him in a low, trembling voice, "Do you dislike walking with me?"

"I cannot bear it!" he said breathing hard, "it is beyond my power. I cannot bear to see your face and the movements of your dear body; it is too much."

"Oh," she moaned, "what a wretched creature I am."

"It will be different," he said, "with the passage of time — but now, I beg you, do not come again. I will come to you once before I go away!"

She wept aloud. "Oh, I wanted you so much to go on caring for me until we both grew old and quiet; then we could sit side by side, holding each other's hand. I can't bear you to be strange and wrath with me."

"How could I be wrath with you?" he said. "Have you sinned against me? You are love and truth itself; nothing I possess is more precious than your friendship; believe me, I shall cherish it. But now I must go away and stay away, until I am strong. Go now, be not afraid for me."

He gave her his hand and she went, weeping.

For six weeks he worked day by day and heard nothing from her. But every day, as he walked along the dyke about four o'clock, he could see, looking beyond the town in the direction of Volkmersdorf, a solitary figure standing. He stood still, and they looked across at one another without daring to raise their hands in greeting.

One lovely evening in the middle of October, when a fresh, cold autumn breeze was blowing and the golden rays of the sinking sun tinged the last leaves of the chestnuts with vivid colour, Heinke Boje came home from Volkmersdorf without having seen him. She went into her room, and there, on her bed, lay a letter, in which he said farewell to her in a few tender words, and beside it a fresh manuscript, with the super-

scription, in the strong well-formed letters that she loved so well, "The Life of the Saviour, presented in accordance with the results of German research: the foundation of the German Renaissance."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE MANUSCRIPT

MANKIND has risen painfully out of the darkness of night. Its rise has taken many hundred thousand years. For hundreds of thousands of years men lived like foxes in a land without trees or forests. Couching fearfully in caves in wakeful slumber, in cunning ambush or in wild attack, their existence was that of the animals, and they had no consciousness of any difference between them. Gradually in the course of thousands of centuries their peculiar qualities, and especially the shape of their hands, raised men above the other animals. Gradually, with many doubts, this recognition came first to one and then another, the most intelligent and bravest of the race.

It took thousands of centuries before it was recognised by all that there is a difference between men and animals. And man is the master. But the darkness and confusion of the souls of animals endured for long ages in their souls, their terrors were the terrors of animals; they feared the wind, the reflections of water, the darkness of the wood, thunder and lightning. Everything around them seemed possessed by unknown spirits; they had no knowledge of good and evil; the differentiation of being afraid from not being afraid, of strength from weakness, of victory from defeat, exhausted their categories.

Wandering in hordes and tribes from the centre of Asia, moving and propagating themselves like sparrows, growing continually, one horde constantly displacing another, they gradually spread over the whole face of the earth, and thus came to different lands and different climates. Some tribes came beneath the exhausting heat of the burning sun; others to desolate regions; others to ice-bound chill, where they lost their vitality, succumbed, or were frozen out of existence. Many of these tribes and peoples perished centuries before our epoch;

others are gradually being exterminated in our own times in Australia, America, and Africa; others, more fortunate, came to regions where strength and progress were forced upon them by the pressure of vigorous neighbours, by sun and wind and sea, by barley and wine. They raised their heads higher and higher, the eyes grew brighter, their foreheads more lofty. Slowly and painfully their fear of Nature died away. The bravest among them went boldly into the darkness; it is the bravest child of a company of terrified children alone in the house that ventures into the dark corner. For long they continued in fear of ghosts and tried to placate them by prayers and offerings; very gradually, with the growth of man's power over Nature, these spirits lost their terrors. Evil spirits shrank back, and their powers dwindled, with the slow and gradual growth of a faint belief in good spirits. There arose a dim, uncertain apprehension that right was not with the strong, but with the good. The inner light of conscience burned up, and as its rays penetrated the mist the path of mankind was clearer; they had a guide, they could not wholly lose their way, they might come further than our dreams may know.

But it was not the whole people, not the masses, that made a universal step in advance; the light only shone in individuals. In a smooth sea the waves come gently swelling on, grey-blue, one after another, far out to sea, till lo, all of a sudden one wave rises higher than the others, leaps up, and comes on splendid in its silver crown until it falls over its own feet. These men, the solitary crowned among mankind, rise like that wave and fall even so, over their own feet.

On the morning of the race the steps forward were slow and tentative—we do not know the earliest names. The art of writing was still unknown, and it is only after its discovery that we are acquainted with the names of those holy heroes. Persia produced Zarathustra; China Confucius; India Buddha; Palestine Moses, Elias, Isaiah, Jeremiah; Greece Æschylus and Plato. All these men stood alone among their people, and had to suffer for having advanced beyond their age. Even in them there still was much that was hard and dark, wild and almost childishly confused, and yet in their hours of illumination they rose to a high and gracious insight which the human spirit can never outgrow. "I came not to hate but to love." "If I have thee, O God, earth and heaven to me are naught."

After the passing of these men there came a time of calm. The universe rises and falls in waves; the exhausted vital force produced no more heroes. Each nation stood in rigid silence, holding its inheritance in its closed hand, and while mediocrity grew the grip closed fast so that the inheritance, closed in, began to putrefy. This inert silence lasted for centuries; on the ocean of national life no wind blew, no waves rose; putrefaction seemed likely to spread all over human life.

Then the sword descended on the peoples living round the central sea. The Romans, a people vexed by no subtleties, troubled by no search for truth, no brooding over problems, but devoted to the practical side of life, the calculation of material advantages, subdued all other nations to their sway; everywhere they rent and disturbed, tearing asunder the old nations of sensitive dreamers, Egyptians, Hebrews, Greeks, Persians, Germans.

And in this wild confusion of dismembered nations there arose a horrible conflict of opinion. There was a seething turmoil of beliefs like the turbulent confluence of seven waters in the stream; men went and asked the philosophers for their opinion; others abandoned themselves to the unrestrained transports of the Greek mystics, crying, "Nature! Nature! O man, thou art no more!" to kneel next day before the image of an Egyptian goddess. Some raised their eyes in worship to the marble statue of a Roman Emperor, seeking in vain for the holiness of human goodness in those harsh imperial traits; the men who went on Friday to hear from the German soldiery how they worshipped Baldur and Freya under the beech trees of their native land, stood on Saturday with covered heads in the Jewish Synagogue, hearing the teacher read from the ancient book, "Keep my commandments. So shall it be well with thee."

This confusion raged all round the Mediterranean; from the streets of Gibraltar to Persia there was nothing but questioning and murmuring, "What is the meaning of human life? What is the meaning of God? What is truth? Do you know what makes a human heart holy and joyous?" Thus at a time of long drought country folk stand in groups talking and arguing together. "The rain must come . . . look at that cloud! . . . no, it is nothing;" then suddenly in the night, when their thoughts are far away, a rustling begins to

sound among the tree tops in front of their windows. Thus men waited and talked and strained their eyes. Man cannot help searching for the meaning of life, searching for happiness.

At last Nature's time of rest came to an end. Its rising and falling is like the rising and falling of the waves, and now once more a man arose, a hero in the mould of the holy heroes of old, and from the east the rustling sound spread over the withered nations, till it became a mighty roar.

In one corner of the huge, motley Empire there lay a country very much like Schleswig-Holstein, of the same size and narrow length and the same extended coastline; in the north the silent expanse of heather-covered hills, in the south a great and brilliant town just as in our country. As in our country, also, there dwelt there in the villages a population of farmers, a mixed race sprung from two excellent stocks. It was an unhappy people, suffering under the cruel and inefficient government of a corrupt princeling in the north, and an imperial legate in the south. Foreign capital devoured the land as a wolf the sheep; the people were drained dry with direct and indirect taxation, customs dues, and monopolies; officials stole and peculated in all directions; all the money, and money is power, was taken out of the country.

Then there was the Church, with its extravagant claims. In the great capital in the south a huge temple arose, with vast halls and courts, lofty, ornate consistories, thousands of priests, high and low, and many teachers attached to it, who spread its tenets through the land; all to be maintained at the popular expense.

The crowning misfortune was that the people was divided against itself; there was a seething confusion in politics and in religion. One party was composed of the quiet people, dwelling scattered all over the country, especially in the villages and on the moors. They were men occupied in laborious manual labour, which leaves the mind free to wander off into strange dreams and brooding abstractions; men occupied in toil for daily bread that left the soul free to raise itself to God. The Church was too cold, stiff, and respectable for them; they sought out some eternal truth to comfort them for themselves, burying themselves after the day's work was done in ancient records and prayer-books, and reading there in joyful amaze-

ment how, in times of like necessity, centuries ago, their parents had not lost courage, but had held fast to the belief that the eternal did not cherish the proud and rich, but rather the lowly and humble, and to them would one day send a "Saviour." Only the few rose to such heights of faith; the piety of the majority was a dull, uncomprehending acceptance.

The second party was the Liberals, and they fell into two well-defined camps. There was a small, highly respectable Liberal party in the capital composed of rich men who, superficially educated, enjoyed the present and were hand and glove with Church and State, caring little for abstract principles; the other was composed of men of an inferior social grade, minor officials of the Empire in the customs and police departments, and the more frivolous, adventurous sections of the working classes, the energetic men of aspiring disposition.

The third party was the Nationalists, by far the most powerful, the party of narrow, orthodox patriotism. Their programme was "Maintenance of national religion and customs in opposition to everything foreign." "Pray seven times a day, wash seven times a day, give alms seven times; go to church daily; alter nothing, improve nothing; this is the way to please the Almighty. To reward us He will send us a hero, a 'Saviour,' who will free us from the accursed foreign beliefs." Clad in its rotten armour this mighty party, full of petty and malign suspiciousness, stood guard over what it considered "purity" and "holiness," inspected all the prayer meetings and schools in the country, ruling the people with tyrannical might. The Liberals resisted, saying, "Live and let live; away with dead formulæ and commandments;" and the quiet country folk resisted, saying, "You are too proud, too narrow, too rigid for us; we seek God after our own fashion, reading in our old, sacred books, and pondering in the night-time. We have no time to spend all day in praying and washing and going to church; we have our bread to earn." The Nationalists invented a nickname to express their contempt for these unpatriotic people, a biting gibe that hit both parties: "They are publicans and sinners."

Over and above these three great parties there were swarms of homeless beggars, tramps, and sick folk. There were no physicians, no asylums, no hospitals, no social sympathy of any kind. All the crime, misery, and vagabondage of the country

skulked up and down the high roads or the village lanes, in front of the very doors of the rich. The Nationalists cast out alms as the creed bade them, and bred more beggars.

Such was the condition of this nation by the sea, a people miserable and torn by opposing factions, tyrannised over by a harsh and grasping Government whose faith was not theirs.

Forty years later the great Nationalist party, summoning together its forces for a mighty outbreak, roused the whole people to an ill-fated insurrection which ended in bloody annihilation. The people survived, indeed, but, as their hero said, like a flock standing in the night without a shepherd, round which the wild beasts are already sharpening their teeth as they cower in the darkness. Restless, it cried aloud, "Help must come . . . what is coming? It is the end of the world! Is it the hero who has been promised us? Laugh! Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die. . . . Count up your resources. . . . Will he come from Heaven? Will he come from the people? . . . Listen! do you hear a rustling in the trees? God, our Father, Eternal Power! help. . . . My soul thirsts for Thee, my body faints for Thee in the scorched and parching land."

In the north, on the moors between lake and sea, there dwelt a man and his wife, Joseph the son of Jacob, and Mary, both of ancient and noble though mixed descent. The man seems either to have died rather young or married somewhat late in life. His wife lived to see her children grow up. This brought her no distinction, for it is a remarkable fact that this mother of a hero seems to have had no comprehension of the inward greatness of her son.

The couple had five children, who grew up in the fair village, seeing and learning all that village life among an intelligent and vigorous race can afford. The first child of the marriage, Jesus by name, had a pair of deep, clear eyes, which saw and understood all the peaceful pictures presented to them, a tender and sympathetic soul whose inner light, burning clearer as his childhood advanced, translated what it saw into something of sweet and precious significance.

The child went out with the labourer to plough; saw his mother's sadness when she was expecting her youngest child, and her sudden joy when she held the new-born babe in her

arms. With his companions he went up into the hills when the first flowers appeared in the fields; they stood with the flowers they had picked in their hands, gazing far across the land to the blue sea in the west. . . . In the evening he told his mother that the neighbour's son had left home in anger and gone out into strange lands, trouble following in his wanton footsteps. He saw the cornfield on the hillside as it lay, white, ready for harvesting; he stood at the door with the other children to watch the wedding of a village maid. In the morning he told his mother how the bridesmaids had gone through the village at night with blazing candles in their hands. . . . He helped to bind the sheaves, and the thistles that were bound up in them pricked his hands; in the evening of the same day, as he returned home with his father, they heard in the street that the richest farmer in the village had died, and the people declared that he and his brothers were bad men, and misers to boot. . . . He saw the shepherd coming through the village with his flocks, and as the sheep went slowly on the shepherd stopped to relate how he spent all night in searching for a sheep, and found it in the morning, and his weather-beaten face beamed with joy. . . . Late in the evening of the same day a neighbour ran in to tell them that the farmer's wanton son, who three years ago had left his father's house and the village with proud words and headstrong anger, had returned home. He had stood for hours in the street in the darkness, looking at the lights in his father's house, clad in rags. "In such rags! And now, what *do* you think . . . just listen!" And they heard the sound of singing and jubilation in the village, so great was the parents' joy at his recovery. The child got up and went out to the door to listen to the singing.

The town child? what does the town child know of the world, of Nature, of human life? Only a wretched, ugly little corner. The village child sees in miniature the whole world and all that in it is.

He was a shy, thoughtful child; he stood aside and looked on at life with quiet, wondering eyes. He played with the other children, but it often happened that almost involuntarily he would step aside from the gay throng as if some invisible voice had said earnestly to him, "Stand aside a little."

The child's eyes became quieter and quieter; veil after veil

sank down over them; but in his soul there was no darkness; the more the outer world faded away there burned up in his soul a still, bright light that filled it wondrously with its glowing purity and gracious warmth. Happy, sad, the childish soul stood in the holy hall, before the lofty doors that soon would open, and "now — now — soon I shall see the radiance of Heaven." Then the children came and waked him, saying to one another, "Jesus is dreaming again; look, he is lost in dreams." He came back to the others, his eyes still misty with the sweet remembrance, his face bearing the traces of a gentle sadness.

Every Sunday as boy and youth he stood among the other villagers in the village school and meeting-room, to listen to an earnest teacher, who read with slow solemnity from the old chronicles and psalms; a Nationalist and clerical, he read out God's many commandments with brows sternly knit, "Thou shalt . . . Thou shalt . . . If thou dost so-and-so, thou shalt please God. . . ."

The boy listened in shy bewilderment. . . . Then the teacher laid aside the book and took up another, and the voice of the gloomy, serious man warmed and his eyes burned as he read of the heroes who had arisen of old among the people as the birds rise out of the heather; how they brooded alone, searching for an answer to the weary riddle of human life, the riddle of birth and death, God and conscience, guilt and justice, seeking a way by which a tender human soul might win its way through life without sorrow or punishment. Some of these brooding heroes did force a way through night and terror, but not by their own unaided strength. Children run fearfully through the darkness, terrified, with such beating hearts, till at last they find themselves in their mother's outstretched arms, where for a while they sob stormily, terrified by their own daring, till, their terror subsiding, they laugh again. Like them, these heroes rushed in blind and eager confidence on their adventurous search for truth and faith to the feet of the Eternal Reality, and there cried, "Eternal Reality, we believe that Thou art goodness." From this glorious citadel they speak to their people with a glowing courage shining in their eyes, tell them of the misery of godlessness, of the great goodness of God, of the glorious hope of wondrous help from God, and of the Saviour who was to come to purify and bless the land.

As the boy listened to these stories of the holy heroes his pure young heart swelled with a secret and lofty joy. "Thou shalt . . ." was forgotten; fear was fled; far into the night he beheld in dreams the brave and holy heroes, with their passionate belief in the goodness of God, their passionate love for their unhappy people, and the Saviour to come, the bravest and purest of them all: till he fell asleep, his cheeks glowing with happiness.

There were in the village a number of upright, unlettered families who belonged to the quiet country party, and probably his parents were among them. His tender spirit drank in the ancient beliefs, the ancient dreams that he heard his parents and their neighbours discussing. They spoke of God, who dwelt above in the blue realms of Heaven surrounded by good angels; of the devil, banished to the remotest corner behind the heavy grey clouds on the northern verge of the sky, with his company of bad angels. Mortal destiny depends on the fortune of the war raging day and night between God and His satellites and the devil and his; all sickness and madness comes from the evil spirits; how they plague the sick people in the village! Seven spirits or angels sent by the devil lodge within the maniac living at the far end of the village with his parents; it is they who make him utter the shrieks that resound through the streets. A time will come when all this shall be changed; some day there will be an end of all sorrow and trouble caused by strangers and by evil spirits. The Saviour will come — the greatest of all the holy heroes. Some say he is to be an angel and fall down from Heaven; others he is to be a man descended from some ancient, impoverished royal house. With the help of God he will set up the rule of God upon earth all over the land, from the moor villages of the north to the capital in the south. Then the people will be free and holy and happy.

Thus the boy heard all the beliefs held by the Church and among the people in this time of trouble and disquiet. And he criticised them all, yet, till the day of his death, he never despised or cast away a single belief or superstition. Like his people and his times, he lived in a world of wonders. For him, too, angels descended from Heaven all his life long. He saw the devil fall like a flash of lightning; he believed that Satanic emissaries possessed the insane and the diseased. He believed

that with the help of God or of the devil, man could perform superhuman actions; the dead could rise from the earth and walk.

But there was a trait of greatness in this growing son of man, a gift that marked him out, and this it was. He comprehended in the music of his nature all the notes sounded by the words of people and by the ancient books, but one supreme note rose in him, sounding clearer, stronger year by year, sounding pure and strong and penetrating above all other notes, dominating and subduing all other notes — the note that had ceased to sound among his people in his time, the note that had not yet been struck by other nations, the note which the holy heroes of old had comprehended and to which they had responded, "Let me rejoice in Thy grace that Thou hast seen my tribulation and hast troubled Thyself for the need of my soul."

His real heroism lay in this, that in a time of dull acquiescence, of sordid ideals, and confused aims, he had held up a high and lofty belief in the goodness of God, and died for this belief in the freshness of his youth. . . .

As yet, however, he is only a boy, a youth, uncertain of himself, cherishing in wondering doubt and bewilderment his profound and marvellous thoughts.

Then came early youth. He learned a craft in the village. He became a carpenter and left the village. Wandering through the valley, down the dry river-bed, he saw the ruins of the house which had been torn up by the last earthquake; then, reaching the sea-beach, he saw the pearl-fishers' boats dancing on the surge, while the merchant stood on the bank with his purse to see what they had caught. He passed through the poverty-stricken moorland villages to the inland lake; standing before the castle that the evil princeling had built, he heard the complaints of the unhappy people of his cruelty and of his ruling vice; he saw the countless numbers of the homeless poor, the sick and the insane lying in the streets, crowds of soldiers and officials railing against them at the street corners. He took a three days' journey with some of the villagers down the huge temple in the capital. There, in the midst of the hungry misery of the people, he saw respectable Liberals, princes of the Church, going in their silken raiment to a rich banquet given by the foreign governor. At the street corners stood the Nationalists in grave mourning garments. The peo-

ple followed blindly, filling the churches, gabbling the prayers, giving the rich priests their poor savings.

On their way home the peasants discussed whether the Nationalists were right in saying that the stipulated gifts must be made to the priests, even though one's own aged parents perished of starvation, for God and His commandments come before filial love; whether it were really God's will that one should not move a finger on the Sabbath, even to help man or beast in trouble. Could God be so petty and so jealous? They pondered deeply over this as they went their way, till suddenly one of the quietists struck up an old song in a quivering voice, "To Thee I raise my eyes, Thou throned in Heaven; behold, as the eyes of a servant are directed to the hand of the Master, our eyes look up to God, till such time as He has mercy upon us."

He returned to the village in silence. In the home of his parents he dwelt quietly, busy with his craft, building and repairing houses in the village. His eager eyes regarded his craft and all that Nature and life presented to him, but they did not stay, caught like fish in a net, but, penetrating like the rays of the sun through all appearances, reached their inner cause, the secret and eternal power behind them. He found joy in the waving field of wheat, in the lily blossoming on the pond, in the young girl standing at the door; but he left them, with no thought of touching or gathering them. All phenomena were to him merely a symbol of the eternal power that lay behind them, dark and obscure. "Thou art all goodness and love. If only all men could share my belief, my happiness! Eternal Power, what am I? what are my thoughts? Send soon the holy Saviour. Great is the need of my people."

The people in the village said, "He is a strange man, full of profound wisdom, of holy earnestness, as innocent as a babe at the breast." They saw and knew no more. They did not guess that behind those pure and limpid eyes lay a soul that grew every day in depth and insight. He himself knew it not. He was a poor, restless son of man, now thrilling with joy, again with unspeakable fears, shaken by godlike thoughts, a genius in being.

Time passed on . . . he reached his thirtieth year. People in the village would ask his advice in difficult matters, but he only cast his eyes down, deep in thought; answering came

hardly to him. A few wise, patient men in the village think and say, "What will become of him? Let him be! only wait; some day he will soar aloft like the eagle." Others shake their heads and say, "What is he? A queer creature, that's all."

His hour is not yet come; soul and spirit are not yet clear. God is still forging and hammering. Of the old heroes it was said, "I make thee to be a pillar of iron and a wall of brass against the whole land, against its Government, against its Church, against the whole population;" for he must be hard, must indeed be of iron, who is to stand alone against the whole people.

The whole land was oppressed and restless, a heavy burden lay upon their souls, they were bound down to poverty and madness. Leaden clouds stretched from the sea to the lake, from the heather hills of the north to the great town of the south. Once, twice, the flame sprang high in the woods or on the moors. Some eager, desperate spirit appeared. "I . . . I am the Saviour! Arise, my people, arise!" The Government stamped the fire out with fierce imprecations, then drew their breath hard. "When will help come to the parching land? Now, or never. Go out, child, see whether the storm is rising."

"There is nothing, father."

Then the first peal of heavy thunder broke over the land.

In the south, not far from the capital, a man arose, a man like one of the old, holy heroes sprung from the despairing people. He stood and spoke. What he spoke was half-despair, half-laughing gladness.

"People! people! hear what I say. Have we reached the end of life and of every hope? Does our need reach up to our throats? Then—you know how the old books run, 'From an old decaying royal stem shall shoot out a young branch.' Come he must . . . he comes! Look! He is quite near. He comes! a man of wondrous powers, the power of God within him! the angels of God on his right hand and on his left. He will harry and slay the oppressors and carry terror among the people. The Nationalists, with their self-satisfied piety; the Liberals, smooth and silky, who sit in church and at the court; all the lying hypocrites who live in luxury and care nothing for the wretchedness of the people, who lay heavy burdens on

the people as if such were the commandments of God, while they themselves do not stir a finger; they load their country's land with debt, devour its houses, and pray all the time without ceasing; all these people are an abomination to the Lord and to His Messenger. He will destroy them all. And when He has done all this, when He has driven forth the enemy and slain those who ruin the people, then the others, the oppressed, the quiet people of the country, shall dwell in peace and happiness in a land purified and free, He their glorious King, they His free and gladsome people. . . . Where are ye, ye poor and pure in heart? How few ye are, my people! Hark! He comes! Purify your souls! Away with all evil from heart and life! Hark! the steps of the Son of God!"

So he spoke in broken words, spoke to a despairing people. So the alarums ring out before the break of day over the army lying in uneasy sleep on the battlefield opposite the foe. The whole people heard his voice.

The Liberals laughed. "Live and let live!" The proud Church party stared. "What? the Saviour is to come as our enemy? What a fool the man is!" All the quiet, unhappy people in the land leapt up. "What a note is that! What does he say? Misery at an end?" and they went to him in crowds. And the clear note penetrated to the silent depths of that divinely quickened soul dwelling in the quiet northern village, to Jesus the carpenter. "What does he say? The piety which the Church teaches is false? God wants pure, holy men. . . . Yes, these are they whom He wants."

At night in autumn a storm rises in the western sea, comes over to land with a roar, expends its first headlong onset in vain against the high, thick beeches round the woodland pond. Foiled, it pauses for a moment, to dash with concentrated force against the stubborn resistance of the trees; as they crash to the ground it throws itself upon the pool, lashing and torturing it. Such a storm now arose in the depths of his silent soul. "What does he say? the long-promised Saviour is coming now? now? now the great wonder is to be? the people is to be free and happy! now? yes, now! Our need is at our throats. Yes, he is coming now. I will go and see the man."

And so the quiet young master laid aside hammer and measure. As he went the Eternal Power glowed and worked

within him. "The Saviour is coming. . . . What does he look like? What will he be like? God and the spirits of goodwill work powerfully within him."

When he reached his destination on the evening of the second day he found crowds gathered together from all directions, from west and east, from the great town in the south and the moors in the north. An ill-treated, confused, and despairing people, betrayed and cheated by King and Church. They looked up to the one strong man who spoke to them of the downfall of the King and of the rich and of the pious Church party, and foretold the time of bliss at hand for all who were free from sin. "The Saviour, the Messenger from God is at hand; in one hand he holds death, in the other a happy life in a free land." Thousands came to him, and, kneeling down in the stream that flowed in its bed of white sand down into the valley, vowed, with his hands upon their heads, "Our souls shall be as pure as the water, as clean as the white sand, so that we may dwell in a pure and happy land under the holy hero, we who now are meek, lowly, and oppressed."

This sight, this supreme moment, made a deep impression on the northern peasant; his soul, freed from the dangers which has beset it among the silent moors, of distraction by visionary dreaming or restless wandering from its true course, was roused at once to insight and to action. "What does he say? . . . Pure men are to live in a pure land? How can a man become pure? He does not know. No one knows. Do I know? . . . Do I know? . . . The pure life? Yes. I can point the way . . . have I not borne that knowledge in my soul since I was a child? Have I not always seen Thee, holy and everlasting power, as Fatherly love? I have been Thy child since I could think at all; Thy child, loving, pure, beloved. In communion with Thee all sin is wiped away. The kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Happiness is at hand for my poor people. Yes, it is at hand . . . now it must come. Help, O Father, that Thy Kingdom come! Bring all Thy people to Thy knees pure and happy as I am! Father, what am I to do? where is the Saviour? Father, who is he? Father, show him to me. . . . Father, *who* is he?"

Overcome by the waves of thought and feeling that surged through his soul, he knelt down in the white sand among the others, seeming in that action utterly to abrogate his will and

to hand over his whole being in passionate self-surrender into the hands of the sacred and everlasting Power above him. "I am Thine, my will is Thine; my Father, who art goodness and truth. . . ." and in a moment of wrapt and wholly blissful ecstasy he seemed to feel and to hear that the Eternal Power, his "Father in Heaven," accepted this passionate surrender of his pure will. "Thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."

He arose and stepped back. That night he stayed in the district; in the new and rapturous illumination of joyous thoughts and sublime presentiments he understood clearly the vague misery, the singing joy of his childhood. "I am a prophet, a herald of eternal truth like the holy heroes of old! A messenger from God. Happiness is coming to my poor people: the Kingdom of Heaven! it is at hand. I announce it, I His messenger! the last of His messengers, the Saviour?"

Next morning he set out northwards. For two, three, hours he walked till his homeward way brought him into a lonely and desolate region. Here the lofty feelings that had surged up in him sank, and as he wandered over the barren moor his heart became heavier and heavier at every step. At last he stood still, brooding. "When I reach home to-morrow evening, I, who have always been so shy and silent, must stand up and say: 'Purify your hearts, purify your lives; the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. . . .' They are all expecting a holy hero who shall free us with sword and word from the foreign yoke. 'Out with your swords!' That I cannot do. God's voice has never said that to me. Or can I? I am the wisest in the land; I have power over men; shall I announce what will please them? Shall I alter a little what God says within me? What I have to say to them is too lofty, too sacred. . . . The quiet, yes; but my mother; my brothers; all the rich men of the village! The Nationalists and the Prince! The first will be suspicious; the second will threaten; and the Prince will have me put in prison. . . . So I must alter it a little; I *must* alter it. I will clothe myself in gorgeous raiment, miracles, and splendid deeds, and then say, 'I am the Saviour! Sword in hand!' and then the people will rally round me. . . . No, no, you spirits of evil . . . avaunt, messengers of Satan. . . . I will listen to God alone."

The day passed and night descended; he cowered at the

edge of the cliff, a poor, lonely man, tortured by hideous doubt, a man in the bitterest extremity of need.

He prays, and strength comes to him for a moment; but again his courage sinks; he prays again, begging his "Father in Heaven" to give him strength and light. He begs, "Show me the truth. Tell me, shall I help my people with Thy sword and Thy word, or with Thy word alone?" All night his soul sought for a way of escape like a caged wild beast that ramps restlessly up and down, glaring in vain at the bars through which he cannot pass.

Later he told his friends, and they believed what had become a part of the popular faith that Satan, the ruler of the evil spirits, appearing from the darkest quarter of Heaven, stood by his side and said to him, "Add something of earth to the pure work of God."

His fear of others, his vanity, all his sensual desires fought with a strong man's strength against that stronger part of him that was pure and holy. All day the struggle lasted. At times he turned to go northwards, and then, shrinking back, he turned again on to the moor. Often he was in great danger of betraying his Father in Heaven and returning home the same quiet craftsman that he had left it, save that his soul was rent asunder and his inner life desolated by the reproachful voice of conscience. Often he came near to adding something of earth, "Out with your swords! I am the holy leader whom God has promised you." The whole future of humanity depended on the purity of soul, the courage, and the truth of a single man.

But he was very brave. He was so stainless, so pure. He thought of the rapture of the momentary communion of his soul with God. In passionate prayer he clung to the knees of his Father in Heaven; and He helped him. Certainly the Eternal was by his side. Yet the work was his own; it is him we must thank. Jesus, the northern carpenter; it is He who helped mankind. At last he arose victorious. "I will do Thy work and Thine alone, without the sword, without any earthly help. I will believe and not doubt; Thy blessed kingdom is at hand, and I must raise it without the help of the sword. I leave it to Thee to show me in Thy own good time whether I am indeed the Saviour. Help me, O Father in Heaven."

Then, he said, he was made strong. Angels from Heaven

stood round him, and fear was gone from him. Drawing a long, deep breath, he went northwards with no more doubt in his heart. His will was now at rest, desiring only to do the pure and gracious will of God. "I will do Thy will, announce the coming of Thy kingdom and Thy rule in my country, troubling myself not at all about other men." He went north.

The report followed him, "The Baptist has been put in prison by the duke; he is to die at the hangman's hand." But all fear was gone from him. He stands there pure and free, in his hands the purest task in the world, close to the Eternal Power, close to his "Father in Heaven."

In two days he reached his native district. Avoiding his own village he made his first appearance as a preacher in a village that lay to the east of it. He rose without any doubt or any fear, his eyes shining with joy and the authority of the Eternal, which said to him, "Arise! speak! Thou art My dear son. Speak! It is My will that thou sayest what thou sayest and dost what thou dost."

The eagle now began to fly. He arose, and for the first time went up to the desk and opened the ancient chronicle; and as they looked at him they saw this was no dry teacher, but a man whose deepest soul was stirred and possessed by the spirit of God. He read the place where it is written: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me. Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Laying the book down he drew a deep breath, and said, "The ancient scripture is being fulfilled now, now. Poor, oppressed people, the promised time of happiness is come; the kingdom of Heaven is beginning among us. Give yourselves to Him and be His children, and all the shadows that weigh on human life will disappear, all of them; evil conscience, sorrow, death itself. In the light of happiness human life will be as resplendent as the halls of God. Give yourselves to Him! be His children! The kingdom of Heaven is at hand, the blessed time of which the prophets spake is at hand. Listen, believe my words, and rejoice."

So he spake, and the poor, the trembling, the oppressed, marvelled and rejoiced. He went on his way from place to place, avoiding his native village, and his long years of silent, lonely pondering had taught him to understand the ground tones of human life. All day his heart ached with a passion of pity for the misery and need where all might have been sweetness, and found no rest for the anguish of his compassion. "I must cleanse my people so that they may find that bliss in the nearness of God which has been mine since my childhood." The whole day he was filled with the immovable courage that inspired the early heroes. "I will make it come to pass. I will conquer my brethren and make them approach God in the joyful spirit which is mine. The soul is made for goodness, its nature is divine; it must succeed in casting forth Satan and his friends. A storm shall blow through the land and set the people free from evil; the good shall conquer and convince the evil; the eager shall carry the sluggish with them; the quiet overcome the cold-hearted pietists. God and His angels shall rule over the people; under His protection they shall be pure and happy, freed from sin and sorrow, each man under his own roof tree."

Such was his faith, his love, his hope: and he announced it in words like morning dew or the water of a deep and sparkling spring, to a people of quick understanding, deep piety, and ancient race, who looked back from the desperate misery of the present to the glory of the past and yearned for freedom and happiness. It was natural that he roused them. Excitement spread all through the northern district, his passage from village to village was like a bridal train. Downcast eyes looked up: they began to sing and hum in voices that had lost their music through long disuse. Once more men talked of great questions at their doors and by the fireside: these were great times when they talked of their God, of their souls, of their country. Stir and excitement took the place of the old lassitude.

The quiet men were well pleased with him. "He doesn't count off on his fingers what one has to do, and what one is allowed to do. Seven times seven: and you may eat this and you may not do that, and on the Sabbath, so and so. Who can attend to all these commandments? He speaks the one simple

truth, 'Give thy soul to thy Father in Heaven and to thy fellow-men . . . then, thou art blessed.'

And in the evening the fishers were sitting and standing on the shore beside their boats: they had listened to him and seen him. "Simon . . . why have you sat all day without saying a word, staring, you who are the most lively of all as a rule? What do you say to the man?" Simon got up from the edge of the boat, his lips trembling, and his eyes fixed on the ground. "Brother, look after my boat and my nets. . . . To give one's soul to God; to have one's life filled with love and truth. . . . Blessed is the man who goes with him. . . . I will follow him and be always by his side."

The small officials surrounded him: he was their man. The Nationalists said to them: "Pray seven times, wash, and lay down your office. If you don't do this and that you are sinners, outcasts, foredoomed to Hell." He did not so. He did not rebuke: he did not curse. He showed them the happiness of a soul relying in love on the goodness of God. "It is a light yoke and a soft burden indeed. How heavy in comparison are the commandments of the Church, the misdeeds, the evil conscience, the anxiety, the struggle for existence. The burden of a life far from God is too heavy for mortal shoulders to bear: but we can bear it with a brave and innocent heart if one rests like a child against the knees of God. And afterwards comes the Kingdom of God."

When they heard this they rejoiced and said unto another: "What can one say to that? It's the absolute truth. What do you say, Matthew, you brooder, what do you think of it?" The same evening he saw Matthew sitting at his desk in his publican's office, and, as he passed, cast a long look towards him: a look that went through and through the man, so that he rose slowly to his feet, compelled by those wonderful eyes and the force of that spotless goodness, and, taking up his cloak, he followed him with blanched face.

All the sick who had lain in misery, often from their childhood on, in the houses of their relatives; all those who had been driven from their homes by melancholy, or ill-weaved ambition, by the visions of madness or the grip of infectious disease, and dwelt apart in deserted and ruinous hovels — all these — and there were thousands of them — came in wild excitement. All believed that for some sin they had committed they were now

inhabited by emissaries of Satan. To them, the possessed, he came, this gracious, gentle son of man, this child of God, with nothing but joy, joy and irresistible hope in his heart. "There is an end to all sorrow. The joyful kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" They cried aloud: "Behold, behold! He is like the holy heroes of old! God dwells within him, a spirit from God dwells within him. He must be able to help us, in whom a spirit of evil dwells." Round him they gathered, a crowd of groaning, cursing, beseeching humanity: lost souls in crippled bodies.

It is impossible to paint the picture in sufficiently moving language. This people had, perhaps, no more sick among them than others, but all the sick lay in the street, aided by no doctor, sheltered by no roof, consoled by no compassion. Now help had come: help from God. Ten thousand sick and one physician! And he? He knew one thing — there is, there can be no sickness in the kingdom of Heaven. The demon of disease fell away like discarded rags from all who were ready to put away evil from them, to take their stand on God's side. He could heal when heart and will came to meet him. There was on his side a holy longing to help, almost feverish in its intensity, a passionate cry to his "Father in Heaven," "shall not Thy Kingdom come in this land." When there met him on the other side an eager faith, an utter dependence of the diseased and weakened will on the courage shining in his stainless eyes, then he could help. "Thou art the child of God? A child of God cannot be sick. . . . Come, give me thy hand. . . . Now . . . arise . . . now . . . rejoice, be not afraid."

They cried aloud "Behold, the Saviour! he is the Saviour!" The cry rang through him. "The Saviour? Am I he? If I am, my people are in my hand. . . . Lead me not into temptation! Evil spirits speak with their lips."

In the evening he came to a village by the lake, and entered the dwelling of an acquaintance. Immediately the house was full of people, crowding up to door and window. In the village there was a hysterical young man, with no strength of mind or body, who had lain for years speechless and crippled in a morbid trance, supposed by himself and the villagers to be smitten by evil spirits. Now, his father and mother took up the litter in which he lay, and, coming to the house, cried, "Let us come in." It was impossible. Strong arms raised the

litter, or the flat-wooden roof, removed some of the beams, and lowered the sick man to Jesus' feet. There was a loud outcry on all sides, the surging crowd turned their eyes to him in passionate expectancy. "You can help: you must help the poor man." The sick man looked up at him, trembling entreaty in his eyes. He bent over, and something of his holy desire to help, something of his confident certainty passed into the sick man. "Since thou hast come in passionate entreaty, in trembling faith, thou art free from the evil power: the evil spirits have no power upon thee. Thou art the child of God: His time is come." With a cry the sick man raised himself. "Arise and walk." It was a great time.

A spring storm went through the little land. He bore the storm and the storm bore him. The kingdom of heaven had really begun. "It is clear: the whole people will be won. Everywhere the rule, the kingdom of God shall have might! His will has hitherto only been done in Heaven, it shall now be done on earth. The land is now becoming holy, and a Holyland is free and happy. What can resist, if God and man stand together?"

The first dark clouds rose in the smiling sky. Two, three, at the same time.

It was the faith of the whole country that a Saviour was to bring about the kingdom of Heaven upon earth. Therefore, soon after his appearance, there began to be questionings among the people. "Is this the Saviour?" They pondered deeply over it: "Is this he? Yes, this is he. Look at his eyes: he is the blessed Son of God. Think how good he is, how blessed the work of his hands."

Then they began to doubt again. "No, this is not he. How could you say this was he? Do you not know that the Saviour shall be descended from an ancient royal house, that he shall fulfil the law, heal all the sick, destroy the oppressors, and create an empire upon earth. This is not the Saviour." The hero knew that he was the Saviour: his own holy spirit said to him: "I am he for whom ye wait, for I can bring my people to the blessed accomplishment of the kingdom of God. I am he for whom ye wait and I will declare that I am."

He saw the deep gulf that separated his faith and the faith of his people: he saw that they did not understand him, that

they could not free themselves from the old, material faith: he saw that they always desired to confound his teaching with this old material faith, and now it surged perpetually round him like the surf dashing against the cliff. The people said to him, demanded with the furious hunger of a concealed desire, "Be the Saviour of our dreams!" He stood firm, pure in heart, gracious in spirit, child and man: "I will be the Saviour that my Father wills."

Then there fell a shadow over that pure and lofty spirit. The sick and the insane were importunate in their entreaties: and so it came to pass that he became a worker of miracles. Then, as now, people were never tired of propounding as a final and irrefragable doctrine, "Health is the highest good." "Make me healthy! and me! and my brother! and my child! If you can do that you are the Messiah, the Saviour." Physical suffering, physical needs, rose up like a giant and pressed him from his path.

The goal to which his path led was not the release from sickness of a hundred sick, but the emancipation of a whole people from all the ills of mind, body, and estate by bringing them over to the side of God. He saw the danger rising gigantic before him, and a spirit of restlessness drove him from village to village, and roused him anew in the midst of his desire to dream alone in lonely fields.

A new trouble came from the south, from the capital. The Nationalists and clericals, dwelling in close proximity to the great temple, used to send their least important teachers, priests, and agents to the poor populations of the north. But now that there resounded from the north the clear note: "Our Father in Heaven has set up His kingdom in our land; He will make us free and blessed," they realised that the question was highly serious. And so these leaders of religion and patriotism sent to the north their most harsh and fervent agents. They regarded him with dark, knitted brows.

It was a strange intercourse, with the mass of the people indifferent to religion, actively opposed to the Church, and the publicans, the betrayers of their country. "Yes," he said, mockingly; "why should I trouble about the righteous, the strong, those who have everything? They need no physician. I love those who seek to be purified and healed, who hunger and thirst after strength." They came to him with uplifted

hands, a commandment at the end of each finger. "God says, you shall fast." "Ah!" he replied; "we are forced to fast when our throats are closed by fear or famine." "God says, you shall do no work on Sundays." "Yes," said he, "rejoice and help one another on Sundays." In clear words, glowing with goodness, he opposed their distorted and senseless interpretation by his truth, which came to men like sunshine. He thought, indeed, that he might avoid a breach with these men. Carried away by the enthusiasm of the people, he thought that, in spite of their gloom, they, too, would be aroused; his brave and stainless soul still cherished the dream, "The whole people blessed and holy beneath the sceptre of God."

But a few days later, embittered by the discovery of their own impotence, they went before the people. There is nothing in the whole world more dreadful than the professional religion of people whose hearts have no love in them. "He violates the commandments of God, do not ye do so. His great deeds are done by evil means." Then the Holy Helper arose, his gracious heart, as always, full of pity, standing before them, as the angel of the Lord once stood in burning wrath before Cain, he said, "Beware! He who knowingly calls that which is good evil is guilty of an immortal sin." They shrank back and made their way south, to the capital, where they reported: "This man is bringing the Church in the north into disgrace; he is a danger to God and the State." They worked in the dark, by underground means. . . . Soon afterwards, on their instigation, his own mother and brothers came from his native village and appeared in front of the house where he was. "We have heard that some say he is one of the heroes of old; others even declare him to be the Saviour himself. He is a poor, demented man. Help us to take him home with us."

When they told him within that his own folk were mourning over him outside, his strong, stainless heart stood still for a moment; but he lifted up his head.

And the goodness of God permitted him at this moment to meet beaming eyes looking up into his. "I have no mother," he said, "and no brethren. My mother and my brethren are those which hear the word of God and do it."

Yet the blow rankled. "I am deserted by mine own people, by those who have known me from my childhood and know

that there is in me a good spirit sent from God. I will go home and see whether they receive me."

He went from village to village, through crowds of worshippers, and curious, miserable, and sick; at every corner agents of the Church; and so reached home. They were ready for him there. They looked at him with sombre eyes. Jesus the Carpenter, old Joseph's son; is he to set himself above the learned priests of the capital? Is he to be a saint and a hero? The Saviour Himself who is to bring the kingdom of Heaven upon earth?

"If you can . . . look, there is a sick man. . . . You have known him since your childhood. Help him."

In the sick man's eye there was no gleam of confidence, of love. His trust and courage, thus lamed, could not avail; he could not help him.

Then they mocked at him, and cried in furious anger: "The fool has made us a laughing stock in the land." They wanted to lay hands upon him. But he went, and departed from among them.

His home was lost.

From this day onward the way of the gracious one led into the shadow; from this day his face bore the expression of intense struggle. He knew not that all could not be children of God; there must be a parting. The Baptist had spoken of it. Well, then, let the parting come. "Think ye that I am come to give peace on the earth? Not peace, but a sword."

There was no fear. His burning eyes sought out his opponents. He knew his path and feared it not. The craftsman took up the contest against the history of his people, against the great men of his people, against all the powers of the world. He knows the power of evil is at an end. God is with him. God gives him the victory. "I am come to cast fire upon the earth, and would it were ablaze already."

Through the land there rang a clear and piercing trumpet call; like a signal to the regiment standing drawn up in the morning grey, to charge upon the foe, it penetrated to the marrow of those that heard. No man had hitherto struck so deep into those sacred springs where the divine dwells in secret in the hearts of men. No one had spoken with such power to thrill and change.

"Is it keeping a thousand commandments, my brethren, a load that is laid like a sack of sand upon the back of an ass, that makes men righteous? Is it praying, fasting, going to church, or washing? Purify your hearts, my brethren; hold your hands always ready to do what is right and true. Only those who do the will of God can hope to live in a free and happy land. Purify your lives, purify your souls! Be holy; the kingdom of Heaven is at hand, which shall set men asunder. Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time: "Thou shalt not kill." But I say unto you, Away with all anger and all hatred, let your soul glow in forgetting and forgiving. Ye have heard that it was said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," but I say unto you, If thou look after another woman with desire in thy heart, pluck out thy right eye and cast it from thee; be pure with the one eye that thou hast. Again, ye have heard it said, "Thou shalt not forswear." I say unto you, A lie is an unthinkable thing to the children of God. Let your speech be yes and no . . . that is enough. You have heard it said, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil. Let them strike you. You will overcome them by your gentleness. . . . Be all goodness and compassion. Put away everything: clothing and family. Have no other thoughts but "Father in Heaven, Thy kingdom come." What are possessions, what is right and wrong in the kingdom of God? But if the power of evil tries to drag you away from God, call on Him and pray, pray fervently. Ye shall be heard, most assuredly ye shall be heard. Would a father, when his children ask him for bread, give them stones? . . . What things are ye to pray for? Trifles? Clothes and shoes, a house and garden, good neighbours, and so forth? Assuredly not. A little bread for to-day, so that ye may live to see the kingdom come. Pray that the kingdom come! Pray that ye be ready for its coming. Pray, "Our Father, Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us bread this day; forgive us as we forgive others."

Looking into their faces, he saw reflected in their eyes the struggle between joyous belief and oppressed misery.

Bitter was his condemnation of all earthly goods. "Accursed is money; accursed the care that lurks in the shadow of money. Wealth is guilty when it dominates all thoughts and

conquers the soul itself, guilty when it lives in idle forgetfulness of the poor and sick dwelling near it in the squalor of their sunless homes. Accursed is money. If you possess it you are guilty. Expiate your guilt; give away your money to lessen the poverty of the land."

A man rose up and came to Him, "Lord, my brother is deceiving me about my inheritance. Command him to give it to me." He turned away in contempt. "Man, who has made me a judge of inheritance? I am no assigner of acres and oxen! I am here to say, 'Let your wealth go. Look, the sparrows sow not, the lilies spin not, and their Father in Heaven feeds and clothes them every day. Shall he let the children of his kingdom, the care of his soul, perish of hunger and cold? Away with money! It is worthless, it hinders you. Do not collect money, collect rather the love of God and man. Care for this only; God's land shall be our home. Soon! to-morrow! or the day after to-morrow! Care and strive only for this—to be worthy of the blessed home, the blessed time that is close at hand.'

"Be not afraid, children of God! Despair not of your own soul; God dwells within it to help it. See how small a grain of mustard seed, you can hold it between the tips of your two fingers; and yet it grows, grows into a tree. Be not afraid, children of God; will one thing only, to bring your souls close to God. Forgetting all else, care for this alone. The merchant goes down to the beach to buy what is for sale. A pearl-fisher held a pearl in the hollow of his hand, a pearl of great price; to be bought cheap. A bargain, a bargain! The man hastened away; he sold and put away from him his land, his house, and all his possessions, and returned with the money in the hollow of his hand, and bought the pearl. It was of unspeakable value. In a moment he became very rich. Brethren, purify your souls! Draw near to God! The bliss of God costs little to obtain. Look at my eyes, look at my life, look at all I do—God's bliss dwells within my soul. God's bliss comes—yes, it comes. Look at me."

An old woman had kept her eager eyes fixed upon him; now she cried in her clear old voice, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts which thou didst suck."

His soul was still full of soaring hope. He forgot and despised the enmity of the clericals. The wound his home had

dealt him healed, although a scar remained. There were many who doubted, but many stood before him with joyful eyes. Lofty exaltation went before him like a gleaming herald; and the faithful stood at his right hand and his left like knightly watchmen. Rejoicing sounded behind him like a waving banner.

His courage was high; he sent the disciples who had been three or four months with him now into the surrounding districts; they declared, "There is an end to all sorrow; the kingdom of Heaven, yearned for so long, is now at hand. A man like the heroes of old, a man beloved by God and men, a man of kindly strength and lofty stainlessness of soul is now among us. He announces the day of healing, he forgives sin, and reproves the spirits of evil and casts them forth. He has conquered altogether; our enchanted souls stand before him in speechless rapture. Believe us, cast all evil from you that your hearts may laugh like ours, and then God in Heaven will suddenly make an end of all our misery, and, with the help of His thousand angels, will build His kingdom in our land."

After a week they returned. "Oh, Lord, even the evil spirits within the sick and the insane did our bidding." Then his soul rejoiced mightily. "I saw Satan fall from his dark corner in Heaven like a flash of lightning on to earth, to save what he could save. He sees that his kingdom is at an end upon the earth. But I laugh and rejoice in Thee, my Father in Heaven; I laugh and rejoice that Thou, a Mysterious Being, hast displayed to me thy graciousness and made me Thy child, and now helpest me to bring to Thee many others of Thy children. I laugh and rejoice that no one has known Thee save I alone, that all must now see from me and learn from me and attain bliss through me. I laugh and rejoice that Thou hast not opened Thy kingdom to the great and wise, but to men like me, lowly and unlearned."

And so, rejoicing, he went on his way, always kindly, always full of graciousness.

A rich Nationalist named Simon, who liked to have famous people at his table and to have a reputation for generosity, invited him to a feast. The table was set in the open hall; the guests sat round with bare feet, according to the custom of the country. There was a great press at the door; a poor girl, tortured by remorse for a life of dissipation, heard that he was

there of whom it was said that the spirit of God dwelt in him in some wondrous manner. She stood there seeking for him; then, recognising the true, gentle eyes, she fell on her knees before him. As she lay there she saw that his feet were dusty from the way, and, taking water from a vessel, she washed his feet, weeping the while, and, bending down, dried them with her long hair. A silence fell upon the hall; there was no sound save her bitter weeping. Then the hero, looking up, saw secret scorn written on the face of his host. "If you were a saint you would know that she is a prostitute." Fire burned in his eyes. "Simon; I have something to say to you." The silence was more intense. "A moneylender lent money to two men, fifty shekels to one, five hundred to the other. Neither of them could pay him back. He gave them what they owed him. Now tell me, which of the two would love the moneylender most?"

Simon smiled: "The one to whom the most was given."

Then the gracious one said angrily: "Listen, Simon. All over our country it is customary to give a guest who comes in from the dusty street water to wash his feet, and a friendly handshake. You gave me neither the one nor the other. You think you do not need to be kind; you think you need neither God nor man; you think you owe nothing to anyone, not even fifty shekels. You think. . . . Oh, this lost, ruined woman! . . . This woman, Simon! Five hundred shekels, that is a great deal to owe God and man! A great sinner! But, behold, all her sins are forgotten and forgiven; because of the love she has poured out to me, a wanderer, and to God, whom she knows within me. Love of God and man, Simon, can cover a multitude of sins. Are *you* forgiven, Simon?"

To her he spoke tenderly. "God in Heaven is thy Father, too, and He loves thee. He loves thee, just as thou art. Do thou love Him also, even if thou canst not free thyself from sin! Go now, do not weep so."

And so he went from village to village, always great and good, filled with new inspirations.

But behind him, far enough behind for the dust of daily life to have settled down and choked the excited souls; behind him there crept black enemies. They rose like crows from the roof of a church, rising up and up, flying on and on, following the wild beast as he takes his lonely way into the field, flying be-

hind him, cawing softly; they rose from the great temple in the south and flew north, flew north behind him, screeching. "You think you will destroy the ancient holy things; you shall yet see and marvel, you fool, how deeply rooted they are in the soul of the people." They cried passionately to the people, "Remain in the faith of your ancestors! Will you deride your fathers in their graves? Is this ignorant man, brought up in some little village far from the knowledge of the Church, on the verge of the moorland, is he to lay hands on the Holy of Holies, which the learned men of God protect? Is he to lay hands on the sole and most sacred possession of our poor, unhappy country, the Church? What else does it mean? Is this to be the promised Saviour? Does he fulfil a single condition of the true Saviour? He is the servant of the devil."

They stirred up misery, fear, and terror; they let confusion loose again. They talked secretly with the women and with the palsied old men. They played upon the stupidity and superstition of the masses; freeing them from the terrible necessity of judging for themselves. "We are priests, and therefore know."

Many refused to listen to them. Those of a deeper tenderness of soul, many a strong, simple man, many a brave woman, many a workman said, "What is the Church to us? Has it ever cared for us?"

Many looked up to him with joyful eyes, transported by his inspiration, his goodness, and his truth. But the great mass of the people, that blind and heavy beast that had lifted its head a little and begun to look about it a little when his clear voice rang in its ears, the mass of the people went back to its slumbers. "Certainly the commandments and customs of the Church are sacred. How could they be so venerable else? Our fathers and our grandfathers strove to keep them faithfully. Oh, me! what an age; why has one to ponder so deeply? Sit still, my soul; my soul, the priests must know. Look how clever their eyes are, and what deep lines are in their lofty brows! Beware, my soul! I pray thee, be at peace and keep to the old order of things." So the heavy beast became calm once more: the crows flew on behind him without uttering a sound.

The sunshiny hero turned and retraced his steps; the whole district he had covered hitherto was not more than five or six

days' journey. When he returned he found a change in the attitude of the people; he saw that they were falling away from him. He went on until he came to a village through which he had passed in triumph four months ago; the people stood on the thresholds, immovable. He passed through several little towns by the lake, where four and five months ago he had been surrounded by eager crowds, with madmen shrieking, sick men brought out into the street on their litters, women imploring him for aid, all eyes turned to him in passionate excitement, every one at his feet, as he declared, "Our country is now like a blessed Holyland." Now the streets were empty, one or two faces looking shyly round the doors. He came to the little town by the lake which only two months ago he had called "my town" in proud assurance, when enthusiasm had risen high in streets and houses; where the kingdom of Heaven seemed already to rule in the streets and to inspire men's hearts. The sick still came, and some of the faithful. But the mass of the people stayed nervously at home. "We can hear no trumpet blast from Heaven. The kingdom of Heaven does not come. He is good, but mistaken." The clericals threatened.

When he saw the decline of faith, this nervous shrinking away from him, he could not restrain the words of burning anger. "Woe to you, towns of the lake; ye who have seen wonders. Others would have repented in sackcloth and ashes. Woe to you, my town! Thou wast raised up to Heaven, thou shalt be cast down to Hell." All joy was gone; his heart was burdened and cast down. What could he do? His soul, pregnant with a new and glorious world, could not bring it into being. What could he do? He knows that his Heavenly Father is ever by his side, but men will not believe. What can he do? To go back is impossible, but can he abandon the cause of his joy; leave the truth with all its sweetness? What can he do? Come to an understanding with the Church party? Say, "Go on fasting and washing, keep the commandments and the Sabbath, and purify your hearts." That was impossible. One cannot cut truth in halves, keep one half and let the other go. If it meant death, he must stand by the truth, one and indivisible. Serve God whole-heartedly, and God's will be done! . . . "What is God's will? What is He doing with me?"

Then there came two events to bring the final clearness, like nightly beacons to show the further path.

Once again for the second and last time the wild, dark apparition rose before him which six months ago, had awakened his dreaming soul with clarion voice; the hero of the stream, the Baptist. He was now a prisoner, and in his prison strained like the captured deer for the fresh woodland and the keen wind. He sent two disciples to the north. "Go and ask him what he is doing. What does he seek? Do not the people exult in him, have they made him king? Why does not he arise like a lion and fill the land with his roar? Do not the old prophecies say the Herald of the Lord shall go south to the capital, and then, sitting on the throne of the ancient kings, rule for ever over a free people? Why does he not go thither, sword in hand, at the head of the people that have exulted in him for six months? Go and ask him, Art thou the great Saviour, sent by God, for whom we have cried aloud for eight hundred years? Or must we wait for another?"

The question fell like lead upon the hero's heart. "He, too, has the old material hero before his eyes! He, too, does not understand." He answered brief and clear: "Tell him, the kingdom of God exists; and this it is: Sickness and sin, poverty and sorrow are declining, and the oppressed people is full of laughing joy." He raised his hand and said, shaken by this cruel separation from the brave hero, "This is a brave and true man, but he has fallen into the grave error of thinking, like the self-righteous, that the kingdom of Heaven will come to pass by means of earthly might. But I say unto you that the pure and lowly are the citizens of the kingdom of Heaven, and they will make their way thither without weapons and without armour, without forms and commandments."

When the clericals heard how he spoke of their venerable precepts they rose against him; they ventured to attack the lion, now that his strength seemed to be failing.

"Tell us plainly what do you say to all the sacred commandments issued by the Church?"

He trampled their sacred customs and commandments under his feet. "You hypocrites, are these the commandments of God? No, they are the senseless invention of men, which come between the people and the will of God. Away with the

Church ritual of righteousness; it is the curse of the people. Nothing matters but the heart of a man and the life he leads."

There was an end of the so-called "sacred" precepts, an end of all pretentious self-complacent righteousness; he cast them all to the ground, the ancient holies, the ornate and costly churches, the ceremonial, the countless priests, the wreaths and masses, the sacrifices and the sacraments, the long pilgrimages, all that had weighed on mankind for centuries he swept away; on his shoulders there now rested the whole burden of human destiny.

He was now an accursed sinner, a blasphemer of God. "Listen, listen! Have you heard? He has defiled everything holy; he is an emissary of the devil." And the masses, that blind, heavy beast, crept further away from him.

"What now? What will become of me and my work now? I feel that death and sorrow are drawing nigh. . . . What then? Farewell, young life. . . . If I only knew how to carry the duty He has laid upon my soul. Oh, dear country, how can I make you pure and holy, ready for the time when God shall come with His angels to set up His kingdom within your bounds? How can I complete my work, hated as I am by the rich and righteous, supported by the people one day, only to be deserted by them the next? How am I to begin? How can I make the people one with me in spirit, so that we can break into the kingdom of Heaven together? How does He will that I should help Him?"

And behold; as he questioned fearfully he saw as if in a mist the old sacred banner waving on his path in front of him, the banner up to which the people had looked with dazzled eyes for eight hundred years. "The Saviour will come; the son of a King." How the people gazed! "Is he coming? He is come? There is the banner swaying; look how the sword flashes!" A wild shout of joy rent the skies, the people were at their Saviour's feet.

"Shall I take the banner in my hand; shall I say I am the Saviour — I?"

"Those possessed by evil spirits cry out, 'You are he!' In many an hour of exaltation the people have urged me to say, 'I am he.' The hero from the river asked, 'Art thou he?' All dream of, all long for, the cry, 'Out with the banner!'"

"I know that I am he. From my childhood I have been the child of God."

"If I do not raise the banner there is no hope that God will win the people."

"Beware, do not touch the banner; there is earth clinging to it. Beware! thou knowest that the Saviour, in whom the people believe, is not he in whom thou believest; their belief is wild, confused, it has nothing to do with thee; it will drag thee and thy stainless mission down into the dark confusion of death."

He went north, across the border, to be alone in a strange place, with his little band of disciples. His soul was heavy and perturbed. "I know that my Father in Heaven is with me . . . my faith does not tremble. . . . God rules within my soul. His kingdom will come on earth, and soon. How strangely hard it is to be one with God and yet unable to bring His will to pass. . . . And it is time . . . I must go south, I must go through the whole land, I must go to the capital and proclaim there also that the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. What am I to do? Listen to the mysterious rustling of the old, the miraculous banner! He who holds it has strength. The people follow him! What do the old chronicles say of the Saviour? 'A twig from the ancient royal stem'—and I am a craftsman sprung from the people. What do they say? What do the people say when they sit by their doors in the evening? 'He will hold in his hand the might of earthly power; he will ride against the foe with waving banners.' . . . No, I will not do it—will not depart from the word that God has spoken to me. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are the pure in heart. And do the old chronicles tell no other story? Do they not speak of the king of peace? 'Behold, O land, thy king is come, clad in peace.' Not a king ruling with the sword over a people armed with swords; a king ruling in the strength of a pure and lofty heart other people that are pure in heart. And I am he."

So he pondered over the history of his people and over his own future, and he did not depart by one hair's breadth from the truth that was the sacred possession of his soul. They turned and went south, homewards. As he drew near the familiar district the crowd that followed him grew.

The contest still raged in his soul.

"Are you the Saviour? Then seize the banner; help thy people and God will be with thee." Already there shone in his eyes the light of another world. The knees of those who saw him bent beneath them; the sick and the poor rejoiced; thousands followed his healing hands, and hearkened to his gracious words, feeling neither hunger nor thirst. He filled the souls with such joy that they forgot their bodies.

The priests alone remained unmoved; religion had long since turned to poison in their hard hearts. "You are a wonder worker, but what sort of wonders have you done? Healing the sick? There are many in the land who can do that. Come, make red fire descend from the blue sky, here on this moorland path where you stand now. Or if not that, then let an angel from God stand with his pure feet on the white sand on your left!"

In bitter anger he replied, "You want a sign from Heaven, that belief and salvation may cost you nothing! Ye have seen and heard of a holiness that has never existed in the world before, and yet ye have not believed! A sign from Heaven? Ye shall have it when ye rise from your graves before the judgment seat."

Hearing question and answer, the people were once more filled with doubt, because they had *seen* nothing. "Many people can heal the sick; ay, and work wonders; the world is full of them."

Once more he crossed the border into the loneliness of the north, wandering over deserted moorland paths, sorely troubled by the scornful attack of the priests and the wavering of the people. "I cannot reach the goal in this way. How am I to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to pass upon Earth? Father in Heaven, help me!"

"Thou art the Saviour; now thou art strong!"

He went further on his desolate way. "What is written concerning the Saviour in the ancient chronicles? They talk of the waving palm leaves and the rejoicing of children, of a joyous entry in the capital, and then of a glorious rule over a sinless, obedient people; but is that all they say? Do they not speak of the people, 'the people will make deaf its ears and turn its heart to stone,' and they speak of revilement and contempt, of bitter desertion, of a miserable and lonely death. They speak not only of the Saviour's victory, but of his death."

"And after death?"

"What then — what after death? What says the chronicle? 'One like a child of man arose to heaven among the clouds, and was brought before the Ancient of Days; to him were granted power and glory and kingdom upon earth, all peoples and all races were to serve him; his power was to endure unchanged for ever, his kingdom was never to suffer destruction. . . .' It may be that the Saviour must first die and go to God to receive the crown . . . and then . . . after a few days . . . on the third day he returns and establishes the kingdom of Heaven."

His soul soared to the heavenly heights and expanded so as to embrace the whole of humanity; weaving visions of marvellous splendour, touching the extreme limits of human thought in lofty delirium. There was no fear in him. If the hearts of men were made of stone was it not written in the chronicle, "I make thy brow harder than stone, as hard as a diamond?" No; there was no fear; no. He will execute his Father's will, were it even more wonderful, even more difficult. If only men are helped! His ideal never changes; it was still the same as when he first arose among men — the condition of humanity, its misery, sickness, madness, wretchedness and oppression, sin and guilt, cannot endure. A wonder *must* take place. The kingdom of Heaven will and *must* come. Then men, pure, rejoicing in the goodness of God, content in mind and body, will find happiness in performing His will, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." This holy work was his to do on earth with the help of God. That was his idea. Never for a moment did he depart by one hair's breadth from his true and stainless self. He brooded long and painfully over the execution of his idea. He had judged the ancient customs; he now considered the hopes of the people. . . .

"I must lift up the ancient standard, it shall be pure and my course pure. I must lift up the ancient standard: only under this standard can the people be inspired by faith. It is the will of God: otherwise He would help me without the standard. I will lift up the standard. Then, then it will come with loud rejoicing from Heaven, with the help of the angels, the kingdom of Heaven upon earth."

So he brooded. Torn by the world's travail, torn by the

very sublimity of his own nature, he went behind the heavy horses that drew the wagon of humanity through the dark valley, holding the obstinate, the slow, and the impatient on a short rein, forcing them up on to an upland path, where the sun shone and the wind blew upon them.

They went on their way across the moor towards the north for three or four days, he in front, lost in thought, the disciples behind with sinking spirits, that only rose when he turned to look at them. His eyes were at once their terror and their joy. Thus they reached the foot of the mountain. How long would he wander on, undecided? The hour of decision must come.

"Tell me, what do the people say that I am?"

It is sad that he should have to ask people's opinion.

The disciples replied, "They say you are one of the heroes of old; one of the dead arisen, they say."

"And what do you say?"

The hot-headed fellow among them cried out of a full heart, "You—you are the Saviour! . . . we have long known it."

"Yes, you are the Saviour."

"Only speak, and you could rule the land."

"And then, out with the sword! Down with the foreign rule and the upstart parsons!"

"You, King in your native country! . . . Your kingdom at the sword's point!"

"And we, your disciples, standing to your right and left, vassals and ministers."

It filled him with horror to see how little even these men understood him, these men, nearer to him than all others, who had been with him for half a year. He answered harshly, "Do ye know what is written? It may come to war and conquest. . . . But the old books tell a different tale: a tale of sorrow and death, and then, and not till then, the glory comes."

They shook their heads; they could not understand. The old books, the inspiration of their youth had taught them only the wild song of joyful contest—up with the banner of salvation! and God and His hosts will give the victory. The hot-headed one came close to him and whispered, "Do not talk so much of humility and purity and death! Talk more about the

sword! Up to the throne! . . . Who shall sit on thy right hand, Master?"

He pushed them aside, "Get thee behind me, Satan. I hearken only to the will of God. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? He who will follow me must put from him all wild and earthly desires, and go with me to life or death, victory or defeat."

They turned and went to their homes.

He went on alone. A man pure, good, and holy, wrapped in sublime thoughts, in wonderful visions and dreams, set apart by his love for mankind and for the eternal and mysterious power which he called Father! Never was man so utterly alone; one man against a whole people, against the whole of humanity. But the Eternal Power spread its arms around him. He resolved to go south, and there proclaim the kingdom of Heaven in the capital, bearing in his brave, fearful soul the power to meet all that might come.

What can stand against the soul of a man sublime and stainless?

As they journeyed southwards, his eyes looking their last on the green hills and vale round the lake, crowds once more gathered the helper and friend of men to hear his wondrous words. Now there was a new astonishment: the disciples did not conceal the secret they had learned. "He himself has said he is the Saviour! The Saviour for whom we have waited for eight hundred years!"

"The Saviour!"

"Was not the Saviour to be of an ancient royal house? Was he not to come in the golden panoply of war? Was he not to wield the sword and ride upon the storm? This man is good, ay, and holy; he speaks of mercy and of purity of heart."

Questions were asked and answered in feverish excitement. There was no wild outburst of rejoicing.

The clericals went to the Duke, who had a considerable regiment in the north, and was always eager to find some way of ingratiating himself with the all-powerful imperial governor in the south. They roused him by saying, "Before he was merely a harmless enthusiast, but now that he calls himself the Saviour he has become a political offender."

Faithful adherents warned the hero of a conspiracy on foot against him, but he was already on his way south. There was reason for hastening his journey. The great festival of the Church was just beginning in the capital; thousands of people assembled from all parts of the country, and their compatriots scattered in all quarters of the globe came too.

He would arise in the midst of the festival and declare, "I am the Saviour. I . . . I shall bring to pass the kingdom of Heaven upon earth." And then the Heavenly Father would appear by his side with more than ten thousand warriors from His Heavenly host. And if not he would come again, soon after his death, with the Heavenly host behind him. He sent a message breathing contempt to the Duke, "Tell the fox that I am healing the sick and the insane, and on the third day I reach my goal." With the courage of despair, conscious of the shadows closing round him, he said, "I must go on my way to-day, to-morrow, the day after to-morrow, for they must rise in the capital whom God has inspired and set in flames." His words entered in like nails into the hearts of his friends. "I must die; but I shall return in glory, clad with the might of God, to establish His kingdom."

And so for the last time he journeyed through his home on his way south, with folded lips, in his heart foreknowledge of death, in his soul the courage of despair, keeping his way secret as far as he could, to reserve his strength for his entry into the capital. . . . But his companions went with him, behind him and before him, in joyous array, crying aloud, "The long-expected Saviour is at hand! The great transformation is at hand! The great day is come; not as we expected, but it is come. Wonders are taking place. Come and behold them."

The agents of the Nationalists flew ahead like crows: "Men of the south, pillars of the Church, hold high your heads. He is at hand, he is at hand, and he says he is the Saviour. The Saviour!"

And a wild outcry resounded from the temples. On to the south, hour after hour, onwards, through crowds, on lonely paths; as they went their souls inspired by his vivid words to the belief that they should stand armed and ready for the break of the glorious day of the kingdom of Heaven; out of the bloody dawn of his death. He told them of the farmer's son who had left his home in the pride of his heart and gone out

into the evil world, and, after wallowing in the mire and falling upon bitter sorrow, returned home and been lovingly received there. . . . He told them of the woman who lost a fourpenny-piece and searched for it far, far into the night, and how her heart rejoiced within her when she found it. . . . He told them of the shepherd's long, long search for the lost sheep. He had a hundred sheep, but he searched till dawn for this one that was lost. How he rejoiced when he found it! Behold, of such worth is a human soul in the eyes of God! so does He rejoice over it! Take heed of your souls, that are so cherished. Take heed that they are worthy of the kingdom of Heaven, which is now drawing near.

The train that followed them swelled as they went on. One day passed, and then another, and the capital was no longer far away. Then the pious fools stepped once more across his path. They wanted to force him to weave a net for himself to hold him in its meshes, when he raised his hand and said, "I am the Saviour — listen: in the books it is written, as you know 'If the man please he can turn away his wife. Get thee hence, woman; I will behold thee no longer.'" He looked down upon them. "Marriage means, ye are one for life."

He was the first to put the weak woman beside the man as his equal. . . . Women of the world, ye owe him much.

They stepped back in silence. He was greater than the ancient writings.

When they halted for the night the mothers came to him with their children in their arms and holding their hands, and asked him to bless them. The disciples, like all the people of their age, wanted to turn the children coldly away.

"Children? Away with them! Creatures of no account! Beat them, drive them back!"

He said, "In the kingdom of Heaven there are none of little account; all shall sit at the feast, all shall be filled. And the children above all! The children above all. They are full of trust, and therefore they are great in the kingdom of Heaven. Be as the children are! Come hither, mother, come hither with thy babe." He took the children on his knee and kissed them.

He was the first to bring the children into the sunshine. He was the first to put the children beside the old as their equals. Women and children of the world! ye owe him much.

They went on for the third and last day.

The crowd grew, procession after procession filling the wide road on their way to the capital. Strangers coming from the east joined them. All had heard of the holy hero, and now heard more as they ran whispering together and marvelling over his mien and the lofty purity of that face, in which already burned the knowledge of death like a beacon in a stormy night. The sea surged round him.

A rich young man knelt in the dust before him, "Master, what can I do to enter into the kingdom of Heaven?"

And he bent down to him and said, "Thou knowest the commandments: 'Thou shalt not bear false witness'" . . .

"All that I have observed . . . since I was a child . . . but there is no peace in my soul."

He bent further down to him; the young man pleased him: he thought, "Here is a soul that belongs to Thee." "One thing is wanting for thy peace of soul: give all thou hast to the poor and follow me."

Then he arose, sighing deeply, and staggered away till he was lost to sight among the crowd.

"How hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

The crowd swelled, procession joining procession. The decision was near.

Two of the disciples came up to him, "Lord, promise us that we shall be thy lieutenants afterwards."

He looked at them in trouble. "Are ye fain to die with me?"

"Yes, Lord, we are fain."

His eyes shone into theirs. "It shall be as ye say; ye shall die with me for my sake, and afterwards ye shall rule with me. But God, alone can say who shall be second after me and third. . . ." He turned to the friends nearest him, "Ye must not let yourselves be called 'lord.' One alone is our Lord, our Father in Heaven. In the world they say: Lord, Lord; rule, rule; but ye say: Serve, serve, as much service as possible. Help and heal. Serve as I serve, who give up my life to free thousands from the evil and meaningless service of life, and give them happiness in the kingdom of Heaven."

The streets of the little town outside the capital surged with the excited crowd. On the branch of a tree there stood a little man, a publican, who had grown rich with the money he had

extorted from a poor and oppressed people. In his eyes was reflected the trouble of his uneasy conscience. "Woe is me, if the kingdom come now and my poor soul must stand outside, though it yearns for redemption."

The Saviour saw the eyes and knew them for such as he could use. "Who is that man?"

"He is a rogue. A traitor, an accursed tax-gatherer."

"Come down from the tree; I will eat with thee."

He walked by him, stumbling and tumbling over his words. "Lord . . . thou wilt be my guest! . . . thou art so gracious unto me. Lord . . . therefore will I give half my goods to the poor this very day, because thou hast been so good to me! Never, never will I cheat again."

After a brief midday rest he went on his way on the slowly rising road that led to the capital, his disciples half in terror, half in secret exaltation; in front, behind, and around him the crowds of men that knew and honoured him, burning with joy and expectation, wonderful visions in their souls.

In the village just outside there dwelt a family, known to him from former feast days; there he rested for the last time. An ass with trappings was brought out, and on it he proceeded.

The capital lay hid behind great wooded hills; but now, near the bastions, the road turned round the last hill, and there before them lay the town, great and rich, with the mighty, ancient temple in the midst, so vast that it formed a town in itself, with its courts and cloisters and canonries. He halted and looked down upon the town; as he gazed and beheld the houses, the temple, the castle, and heard the murmur of the great rich city rise to his ears, there was borne in upon him the certainty of a tragic end to come. The sorrow of that moment, and terror for his dear home, overcame him, and tears sprang to his eyes. But only for a moment. "It is the will of God! His will be done. If their hearts are of stone mine is of diamond." As he turned to his followers his eyes looked as they had done in the north when he drove from him the evil spirits of doubt. They saw, and a wild outburst of joy broke forth. Garments were spread upon the way and the street was full of palm branches.

"The kingdom of Heaven is at hand! Help, Lord on high!"

"This is the kingdom of Heaven."

"This is the branch of the ancient royal stem."

"A time of joy in the land! Help, O Lord on high!"

Men and women ran and cried aloud for joy; children leapt and sang; crowds poured out of the houses and from the mighty courtyards of the temple. They had long ago heard of his coming from northern pilgrims. Marvellous was the noise everywhere. "A time of joy in the land. Help, O Lord! The kingdom is at hand! Help us!"

The clericals stood by with faces white as death. Two of them pressed their way up to him, "Forbid this mad cry!" He looked at them in lofty scorn, "Were they silent, the walls would cry out."

The whole town was in an uproar. The governor and his mercenaries looked down from the citadel in horror to this mighty stirring of the people. There were some who asked, "Who is he? Who is he?" but the masses knew. "It is the pure and holy hero from the north. He says he is the Saviour. He says that the marvel is at hand, the kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

There stood the vast and costly temple buildings, old and new; in the courts and in the halls the gay turmoil of the market, oxen and calves in long rows, there a herd of sheep, there birds in cages, there cartloads of grapes. Imperial gold was exchanged for the currency of the Church at the shining counter of the money-changer. "Give the best of your money and your goods, O people. Give the sweat of your brows! Here! There—God is content with you; you are great in His sight."

Poor people! what a God is this; thy priests lay upon thee a double poverty; they take away thy daily bread and they corrupt thy heart so that thou canst not see the truth.

The man from the north knows another God; he does not want hands full of gold, but hearts full of courage, purity, and brotherly love; not churches and feasts and crowds of priests, but right and justice in the land.

The hero, the Saviour, stood in the midst of the temple and raised his clear voice. The table by one of the money-changers overturned; the market women began to scream, sheep ran about, cages fell over. Terrified by his lofty presence and the force of his words, the sextons fled. "I say unto you in the

name of God, 'My house shall be a house of prayer.' Ye murderers, ye robbers, is this your Hell?"

The town was filled with wild excitement. The deed was monstrous. The timid flee, the heavy tramp of the soldiers already in their ears. The rest of the crowds from the north rejoice. The priests stood in impotent rage at the doors of their houses. The righteous and the just looked at him with earnest eyes and closed lips. "This means death for thee, thou brave and stainless one."

The court was now empty of all worldly traffic; the Church was pure. The kingdom of God established. Pure hearts are in unison with God, and their hands lie in their brothers'! The crowd pressed close to him. His soul exulted. "I shall win them all, all! The way is straight into the joyful kingdom of heaven. I need not taste the bitterness of death. . . ."

But in a remote court the clericals were gathered together. "He must die. That is clear. But caution! the stupid people are on his side. He must die . . . that is clear."

For two days he was king of the multitude, ruling in the courts and in the halls. The temple was purified of worldly things; the feet of bearers carrying out the sick rang out clear on the stone flags. Raised to something almost superhuman in these hours of spiritual elevation by the consciousness of seeking nothing for himself, doing all as the servant of God, he wielded a marvellous power. Children stood in crowds between the pillars, shouting out the cries by which men had summoned the Saviour of old; thousands lay at his feet; fresh crowds listened to his words, rapt by his wisdom and goodness, slaking the thirst of their famishing souls. For centuries the high places of the land had been filled by mere shadows of men, mere tools of corruption; never by a man genuine and pure of heart like this one.

"How genuine he is! how pure! how simple!"

"Yes, the Saviour must be such a man."

"A scion of the ancient kings."

"He is not descended from a royal race."

"Is he not?"

"Then he is an impostor!"

"That is not true; look at his face; listen to his words—can that be an impostor?"

Two elders of the Church appeared in the gateway, tall and dignified men, and approached him. "Make way there."

The crowd makes way.

They come up to him and say, "We ask thee with what authority art thou come?"

He looked at them in bitter scorn. "Tell me, had the hero who stood in the stream a year ago, preaching conversion, divine authority? or was he an impostor?"

They dared not say he was an impostor; the people knew him for a pure and true man; they shrugged their shoulders and went their way. Like the clang of steel there fell on their ears the parable of the evil tenants, "They killed the servants whom the householder sent, and the householder had one dear son . . . him also they killed. I say unto you, the Lord will give the vineyard unto other husbandmen."

The high priests were defeated; they were far removed from the people, immersed in the world of books; yet most of them were honourable men in the main. But now the black spies, the pious knaves, appeared again; how they rubbed their hands; what inspiration sparkled in their eyes! Inspiration, indeed.

"Master, we know that thou art true and carest not for anyone, for thou regardest not the person of men. . . . Our mind is troubled, . . . tell us, may our pious people pay tribute to the Emperor? . . . you know the Emperor is a heretic?"

What now? If he said "No, no tribute," the imperial tax-collectors would seize upon him, and they would be rid of him so. If he said "Yes," the people would turn against him, for the tribute was thrice hateful, because it was heavy, because it went to a heretic, and because it went out of the country. If he had been a man of low aims! but his ideals were of a loftier sort. "Ye hypocrites, if ye carry the Emperor's money in your pockets, pay him tribute with it. . . . Pay and trouble no more about it. Think of your souls . . . see that they do the will of God."

So they, too, went their way.

In the evening some of the courtiers from the castle came to him, a strange mixture of frivolity and piety in their mien, such as is characteristic of such men. They had been discussing the events of the day at dinner and come to the conclusion "One must not treat so-called heroes too seriously." What did such men care for the condition of the people? They came,

smiling with a kind of inebriated pretence of piety. "Master, in the old chronicles it stands, if a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his widow. Now, suppose the woman married seven brothers in turn, in the resurrection whose wife shall she be?"

He answers shortly and sternly, "In the resurrection there is no marrying nor giving in marriage; they are as angels in Heaven."

Then a respectable man came up to him, desiring to know, in one word, for the comfort of his own soul and the souls of all those that stood there, what was the mysterious source from which as from a spring this pure and wondrous life should come. "Tell me, which is the first of all commandments?"

The Saviour turned to him and compressed into one word all the hundred commandments of the Church. "Thou shalt love God with all thy heart and soul, and thy neighbour as thyself; that is righteousness. Anything else is the superfluous and baneful invention of men. This is the great and first commandment."

The questioner's eyes shone. There were many, many shining eyes there.

But many indifferent, too. "My father and my grandfather were good men, and they contented themselves with the ancient precepts."

And many doubters! "It is a dangerous business; who knows what the issue will be."

"I have a house and a small field."

And here and there a mocker. "You will not enter the kingdom of Heaven." "I don't want to; it's too clean." "A strange saint, this." All these men faltered and then dropped out.

All the time the clericals were busy spying and prying. For two days he had preached; preached and conquered. What do such conquests effect? The whirligig of time brings round its revenges. The clericals were busy. "It is absurd. This the Saviour! Is he descended from a royal race; is he not a craftsman from a corner of the country where they are all of mixed descent! and all sorts of strangers come pouring across the border."

He heard the conflict; he saw that all was lost if he could not conquer here. He told them it did not stand in the sacred

books that the Saviour must be of royal race; but words were vain; this belief was fixed firmly in their minds. He had nothing to give to the animal instincts of men; there was nothing in his hands but godliness, purity, and truth, and this will not satisfy a people, not even for three days.

And the angels of the Lord came not.

They are busy compounding reason and folly, truth and misery, fear and blood; and gradually they conquer. He does not quail. More and more clearly he sees that defeat must come; he only grows firmer, more unbending; in his soul there grew, stronger and stronger, the mystic faith. "God is yet with me." He sought in the old books for all that could strengthen that proud faith in the midst of the terrors that lay round him like the terrible beasts of darkness. If death were to come, the books foretold resurrection and return; if not in three days, later; return with all the might of God! Then the kingdom of Heaven! He must believe, or he could not bear the burden. Thank Heaven for the words of the books.

That evening, as he left the temple for the last time, his dispirited disciples looked at him with anxiety in their eyes. "Teacher, look at these mighty stone walls; they have stood for a thousand years; wilt thou, alone, attack them?"

Then he revealed to them the picture of the future outlined by his tortured soul.

"When I am dead then shall be bitter travail in the land. Again and again will the ancient foes attack the land from without, and false beliefs rend it within; children will rise against their parents; there shall be division between brother and sister. And all this shall be as a sign of the coming of the kingdom of Heaven upon earth. The son of man shall come with might and glory from heaven unto earth and bring to pass the kingdom of Heaven upon earth. Be not afraid! Endure! I shall return."

And they asked him, trembling, "When shall these things be?"

To that he can give no answer. "It shall be in your lifetime. Suddenly. Be on the watch. Watch and pray!"

And while he brooded and wrestled with his own soul — "Be strong! quail not — that is to betray thy Father in Heaven," strengthening his soul with wondrous dreams of the

future—the clericals were busy plotting for his speedy destruction.

He had the true hero's belief in all mankind, and among the disciples there was one who was traitrous and weak. When he saw that things were going ill in the capital, the little faith and courage he had had deserted him, and "his opinions changed;" "scales seemed to fall from his eyes," and vanity reinforced the charge. He went to the men of darkness. "Give me so much," he said, "and to-morrow night I will lead you to a place where you can capture him without difficulty."

They listened to him without shame; no one leapt to his feet and said, "Away with the rascal; I cannot bear to look upon him." After a brief discussion they decided on doing the deed—to-day. No one came forward in his defence; no one cried out in his anxiety; not one of these shadows had the least suspicion of what they were destroying; they merely stared with the stupid eyes of fishes at the golden crown which had fallen into their pond. All were rotten to the core. Among all these ghosts the appointed victim alone had the breath of life in his frame.

Evening came. The behaviour of the enemy and the disappearance of the scoundrel had warned the hero and his disciples to expect the attack that night.

For the last time he sat down to table with his disciples. It was an ancient custom to keep this day as a feast, with all the means at the householders' disposal. He passed round lamb's-flesh, broken bread, and wine in cups, while offering thanks in a short prayer, in which he recalled the gloom of past times when God had stood by them as their ally.

At first he spoke with some sadness of his pleasure in having been permitted by his enemies to enjoy the hour of peace in the celebration of this ancient custom. But when the first wine cup went round the horror of his imminent doom rose hideous before him; looking at them he said sadly, "I shall not drink wine with you again; but when my Father's kingdom comes we will drink together thus in a pure and blessed land." Listen! is that the soldiers' feet? Murmuring a grace he broke the bread, terror in his heart. "Thus it shall be with my body; broken even thus." Once more the red wine flowed into the cup; he saw his own blood flow, and thinking of the old

alliance with God, said, "I give my blood that God may make a new and stronger alliance with my people." They rose from the meal and went out into the night. Listen — is that the tramp of soldiers in the street?

He took the arm of his hot-headed disciple and said to him in a low, quick voice, "Listen; I know that the devil will try to tempt you from my side. I have prayed God earnestly that thou, the bravest of all, mayst not lose thy faith in me and my return. If thou recoverest from thy terror, strengthen thy brethren."

The hot-head boasted loudly, "I? terror? I am ready, now, this moment, to go with thee to imprisonment and death."

Then the hero said, "This very night, before cock crow, thou wilt desert me."

His soul quailed as he went on; the joy of the past stood out in bitter contrast to the sorrow of the present. "Do you remember how I sent ye forth, in the north? Did ye ever want for anything?"

They all shook their heads. "No, never."

"But now! Think; ye must be armed like soldiers."

"Two of us have swords." But thus they turned off on that false track on which he must not stray, however, and sorely his soul longed for safety. He broke off quickly. "Enough of that."

They came into an orchard and weariness came over most of them. They threw themselves down on the grass and slept. Three of the most faithful went on with him; but they, too, were sorrowful and weary, and sank down.

A feeling of utter desolation came over him and he begged them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful; even unto death; abide with me." They lay resting on their elbows, sorrowful and weary, unable to say anything. His weary, lonely soul turned from men to the Eternal Power, "Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me! nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Then turning to his friends, "I beg ye, watch with me . . . thou, my faithful one, wilt thou not watch with me?"

Again he turned from them to the Eternal, kneeling and praying. "If it be possible . . . not my will, but Thine. . . . Father, is it not possible?"

It is not possible; the unfathomable law of creation has de-

creed for man death and sorrow; progress is only gained by the sufferings of the best among mankind.

He knew it, and took his trembling soul in both his hands. "Not my will, but Thine."

So he lay half the night through. And the report is true that he found consolation.

Then came the clang of arms. Amid the smoke of the torches stood the betrayer. . . . The swords flashed. The disciples fled.

They led him into the town in their midst, into the court of the high priest. And in the courtyard soldiers sat and lounged around the fire; servants came and went; all kinds of miserable wretches, dependents of the Church, had gathered together there by order. In the half darkness, at one side of the fire, a short colloquy went on, with much pointing of fingers.

"Thou wast with him."

"I . . . what nonsense!"

"Thy speech betrayeth thee. Thou art from the north."

"May I be accursed. . . . I have never seen him in my life." He stood there, pale as death, with trembling hands. The high priests went by. He slunk out; reaching the gate in safety he went out into the dark street and wept bitterly.

Morning comes, and the elders of the Church assemble. The affair has been cunningly contrived; make him a political criminal and he falls into the hands of the civil power. "The State is our bailiff; its justice is speedy." They asked him, therefore, one question only, "Are you the Saviour, the king of the people?"

The hero prisoner raised his head; in those pure eyes there burned a light that was not of this world. "I am he! and ye shall see me the Saviour, on the Almighty's right hand, descended upon earth in a cloud from Heaven." That was enough.

Day had broken. He was handed over to the watch and led into the imperial office.

The whole town was awake; crowds filled the streets. Many a fist was clenched; angry tears stood in many an eye; but the gate closed behind him; he was fallen into hard hands of fearful strength.

He was accused before the governor as a political offender. The governor, an elderly man, had seen strange customs in

many lands, and accommodated himself readily enough to them all; like many men in high office, he had either quite forgotten, or never known, any respect for individual consciences. He looked at the accused before him and said, "You are the king of this people?"

"You are right."

The governor looked at him again. "He seems to me a harmless creature; I shall let him go."

But the pious rabble that stood crowded behind the pillars cried, "Crucify him, crucify him!"

This was the imperial punishment for treason. The condemned was bound or nailed hand and foot to an upright stake, and left to hang there till he died. Many thousands had perished thus.

The most important dignitary of the Church went up and spoke in low tones to the governor. He was really a traitor; he had a great following, especially in the north; if he let the man go . . . the Emperor was said to be very sensitive on the question of treason. . . . The hint was understood. The governor's advancement came before justice. The hero from the north was condemned as a revolutionary and pretender by the law of the State to be scourged and then bound to a stake until he died.

The blows of the scourge cut his flesh to the bone; he endured the extremity of physical and spiritual anguish. His strength was absolutely exhausted when the blows ceased; he could not even support the stake which he had to carry to the place of execution; a man who happened to be by had to carry it for him. Two men condemned to the same sentence for street robbery, were led with him to the place of execution.

They stripped him on the bare hillside above the town, laid him down and fastened him to the stake. Powerful hands seized him and raised him up. The soldiers offered him of their drink, but he did not take it; he was too weak. Some of the scribes and some people in the mob mocked at the dying man, and the two thieves also, "Thou art the king! help thyself, then!" No one knows what passed within him. He said no more. To the last he must have cherished a faint hope that his Father in Heaven would spare him the crowning bitterness. But no ten thousand angels came. Not one came. Not one of his disciples, not one of his relations was there. After he

had hung there a few hours he died of loss of blood and suffocation.

Such was his life.

Such was his death.

He was the fairest of the children of men.

The scattered disciples had fled in twos and threes to the north to save their lives. Arrived there, terror-stricken and exhausted, they began cautiously to speak of him. He had certainly believed, he had said to them definitely, "I shall return! soon! on the third day! I tell you, I shall return, clad in divine authority."

Three days . . . eight . . . went by. He did not come.

"He must come. He cannot lie; he cannot be mistaken. It is quite impossible that any grave, however deep, should hold such a hero in. How he loved God! How he trusted Him! Did he not say, 'Would a mortal father give the child, that asked him for bread, a stone? and should the Almighty, Whom he trusted so, give *him* a stone?' How he loved us! What a pure and gracious being he was; how he uplifted our hearts. Oh, Lord, what can we do without thee? Return, O Saviour, bring to pass the Heavenly Kingdom! We need thee so."

"He must return," said the old chronicles. "He must return," whispered men, looking around them with yearning eyes. "He must return," whispered the lake and the woods and the wind there where he had been only fourteen days ago. "I must see him again," said Peter, who had denied him, "or I cannot live."

"Listen! Did you see anything, Peter?"

Next day the first rumour arose. In the evening Peter had seen him walking along the beach, where he had walked so often; there in the darkness he had stood, a friendly spirit, his eyes fixed upon him.

The next day a new rumour spread from village to village. His old friends, the fishers, had been sitting on the beach that evening eating their supper of bread and fish round the coke fire. The fire blazed, the sea roared, the stars shone in the sky, the night folded them in her giant arms, and they spoke of him. "Do you remember? Then . . . yes, and that other time . . . what truth he had; what understanding . . .

and how good he always was . . . a dear gracious being. . . . Do you remember how we sat here . . . here on the beach . . . at our evening meal round the fire, the fire blazing as it is now and the sea roaring; and he sat among us and prayed in his dear voice? . . . Oh, God. . . . Look, then! . . . Did you see? I have seen him! He stood there just behind you!"

Another evening three of his disciples were walking in the darkness on a lonely road leading to the south, in deep converse about him; they wandered on and on, children of an age where all the world was an enchanted garden and the night the home of mystery; the wounds of their souls burned, their love to the wonderful man glowed. . . . "And they saw him? Was it really he? He lives? He lives! Where is he now? It was about this time that they saw him; what does he look like? Dear, they said, and shining . . . yes, dear and shining . . . perhaps he is with us, invisible . . . suddenly there comes a flash of light, and he stands there by the tree. . . . Did you see anything? Oh . . . calm your fevered heart! . . ."

They came home with burning eyes; they had seen him. "He went past us in the darkness and disappeared."

There was no stopping now.

Since waking eyes might not behold him, the yearning eyes of faith, shining with passionate love, saw him. Since he came not in the clear light of day they saw his apparition in the darkness.

Weeks went by. . . . Since he came not in his glory he could not hold his place as a wandering light; the apparitions faded away like mirages in a few weeks. But the legends of the apparitions grew, expanding what had been seen.

Years went by; he never came; they still spoke of him. He had stirred their hearts.

Gradually there collected among the fisher folk and the moor dwellers a band of believers who accepted him as the Saviour and hoped daily, with glowing faith, for the day of his return to bring the Kingdom of Heaven.

Years went by. The band of those who spoke of him and believed in his return, grew, extending as far as the capital, and from there, through holiday visitors, to their compatriots in the great imperial city, including every country and every kind of superstition: Syrians and Egyptians, German soldiers and Greek workmen. They painted and decorated the story of

the Saviour's life. These children of a wild and restless age dwelt in an enchanted world; when two or three were gathered together they whispered the legends of his life with beaming eyes.

And so the brave and simple life became more and more marvellous.

"I have been told by someone who heard it from one of the disciples that he walked upon the sea."

"Yes, and have you heard the story of how he commanded the storm?"

"Have you heard — I was told by someone who came from the place — that once four thousand people followed him across the moors? And he fed them all, just think, with seven loaves!"

"No; there were five thousand people, and he had five loaves; and afterwards they collected twelve baskets of fragments."

"He raised a man from the dead."

"The greatest is that he himself rose from the dead."

"Yes, that is certain; he appeared to all his disciples."

"The watch over the tomb was broken up."

"He ate and drank with them. They ate fish."

"Once when I was at home for a feast I heard that he had appeared to five hundred people at once."

"He rose up to Heaven before their eyes."

"To Heaven? What will he do there? He is going to establish the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth."

"Yes, he will return. He has only gone for a time."

"Yes, indeed, he is in Heaven now; else he was still among us, for he certainly rose from the dead."

All that they had desired in vain from the son of man, heavenly descent, a royal lineage, supernatural marvels, resurrection: all this was now attributed to him by passionate love, poetic fancy, and religious longing.

So they spoke and waited.

One year after another passed. They prayed as he had taught them to their Heavenly Father, "Thy kingdom come;" they lived pure lives and helped one another, happy in their longing.

Some of the disciples died.

And yet he had said, "I shall return in your lifetime."

They waited and waited.

He did not come.

And because he did not come as he had promised there was a danger that his followers might remain a narrow national sect; that his life had been lived in vain and would be forgotten; that the salvation of humanity, the glorious purpose for which he had died, might be lost. There was a danger that this gracious tender personality might float away like a perfume that is shed.

But a man of might arose, a strange, strong man, to be his preserver and his herald.

Not far from his home there dwelt a man of the same race, a Nationalist and clerical; a man of deep learning, wide and general education and experience and keen intellect. Yet he was diseased, through and through. In many passages in his letters to his friends he expounded the nature of his disease; he was tortured by nervous attacks, in which life appeared a scene of misery, horror and death, attacks aggravated at times to epileptic fits, during which he saw in a trance wondrous visions of heavenly glory and beauty. He was a little younger than the hero of the north and had never seen him.

With some of the educated men of his time and country he shared a very peculiar faith; that time of disturbance suggested strange theories to imaginative minds. His belief, passionately and ardently held, was briefly as follows: God, in the fulness of His eternal might, will send down from the heavenly regions the Saviour, an eternal and heavenly being. This eternal and heavenly being, who had been God's right hand in the creation of the world, greater and more glorious than the angels of God, will conceal his heavenly majesty in a human form. As the Saviour he will fight the evil men and spirits that possess this wicked world; will conquer them or perish. At the last he will conquer with the aid of God and His angels and free mankind from all evil. And this eternal heavenly being is coming soon; it must be soon. How full my life and the lives of all men are of misery, sorrow and distress. It may come any day. Heavenly being! gracious vision! Saviour! The Kingdom of Heaven! come, come; the world is ripe.

When this man, holding this faith, heard that there was a sect in the north which maintained that the Saviour had already appeared on earth in the guise of a carpenter, that he had been

denied and killed by the pious authorities of the Church, but had risen again and would soon return, he was consumed by excitement and rage. It was impossible. *His* Church had denied the holy one sent by God? The righteous in the land had not recognised the heavenly being? . . . Calling for assistance from the State he hunted them down and persecuted them zealously.

But his faith gave him no peace; it was cold and meaningless; the mere skeleton of a faith, without the flesh and blood of life. Sick in mind and body he longed for this life. "Lord, send the heavenly being soon! Lord, how will he appear when he comes? How will he come?"

Pondering one day over the "false Saviour," he went along a lonely road, brooding in passionate aspiration. "Gracious and pure they say he was; unspeakably dear; he wanted men to be children of God; away with the external forms of righteousness. . . . Yes, that is true; such are his people. Their trust in God is wonderful, the joyful sense of being His children, with which they endure all that I lay upon them. And they are so gentle, so friendly to one another. They have all, all that my poor soul yearns for in vain. . . . He was slain and arose from the dead . . . freed from this misery of flesh. . . . Their eyes have looked upon him . . . if it were true? Was he really the Saviour? . . . Oh, if he would only show himself to me! If I could see him, risen, a denizen of Heaven! Then I should be free from the burden of my body, then I should stand, uplifted, free and blissful close to the knees of God. . . . Oh, then! . . ."

And, behold! as he went on, in an agony of indecision, one of his physical and spiritual attacks came upon him, and he saw the Saviour standing in the radiant glow of heavenly beauty and glory.

From this hour on he devoted himself with restless energy to preaching the hero. "He has appeared to me; he is the Saviour." And he decked the hero, the true and simple son of man, with all the marvellous attributes of his imaginative faith. He was the eternal Godhead, the great eternal wonder of the world. He overlaid the humble simplicity of the son of man with sevenfold brocade, glittering and heavy.

The simple moor folk had known his mother and father, had sat at table with him, seen him in laughter and tears, in sick-

ness and health; they had seen him doubtful and uncertain, stirred to annoyance and anger. He had walked with them the long sandy ways to the town; they knew that he was not the creator of the world, but a man like themselves.

This man, his poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling, had never seen him; he knew little of his life, and was little interested in it; he saw in him only the wonder of the world, dead and risen from the dead.

He cried, "Awake! awake! God has been in the world! Awake! He comes . . . he comes! Make haste! . . . to-morrow or the day after to-morrow he will come down from Heaven and pass judgment."

His fiery eloquence not only persuaded the disciples and even the ancient followers; it convinced others, fellow countrymen and strangers. People longed for a great and conquering faith to harmonise their view of the world and co-ordinate its elements. In him gifted, courageous and inspired by a passionate love of right, his new belief and love glowed like some divine frenzy. His imagination knew no bounds; he knew the secret plans of God, the creation of the world, judgment to come—nothing was concealed from him. He erected a marvellous edifice of thought, strongly built and inter-penetrated with the fiery breath of love, that reached up from the foundations of Hell through the vaults of death, up to and even above the arch of the seventh heaven.

And so the noble simplicity of the human picture disappeared. The true man, striving and fighting upwards through pain, was distorted into the eternal wonder of the world. The man who passionately loved his poor people and died for them in spite of hopes betrayed became the eternal Redeemer of mankind yet to be. His words, "these are by nature the children of God; they can do His will, if they will it also," were twisted to "these are corrupt by nature, powerless, the children of the devil; they only reach God by the help of a wonder." His words, "Feel thyself the child of God! Do the will of God! Who so doeth the will of God is blessed," became, "Do this; but only if you believe also that the Son of God has died for you, are you blessed." His hope "that he should soon return to erect the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth" became the belief "that he would appear again as the Eternal Judge of all men, living and dead."

Only in *one* thing did he keep close to the pure and lofty son of man; like him he said that love of God and man came first of all.

He preached sermons glowing with passionate love of the eternal, heavenly being, and of God; and of the men whom he so longed to save. He endured danger and trouble, mockery and abuse. For all his strangeness, he was a great and noble-minded man; and his courage was heroic. Up to the hour of his death he preached, "The Eternal One cometh! He cometh! and judgment with him!"

But he came not.

He came not.

Then the faithful accepted the conclusion that the time might still be far away. They took life more easily; abandoning the passionate belief that he might return every moment they looked forward to the calm hope, "After death we shall come to him and he will have mercy upon us."

In such a creed there was room for priests once more; they gradually forced themselves between the "Divine Redeemer" and men; the old juggling with human fears and human indolence began again; once more the easy priest grew sleek and rich. It all was as it had been when the hero arose. They collected the old chronicles over which he had so brooded in his youth; they gathered together four wonderful accounts of his life, and the epistles of his great followers, and a few other documents dealing with him; and bound up all these contradictory and discordant stories in a book, which they called "the Holy Writ," a book which they said, and most people believed it, had been written under the eyes of God Himself; a book which contained no error, admitted no contradiction.

The faith thus twice modified was both comforting and attractive. It gained more and more adherents. Even the rich and powerful found it tolerable, and this increase in numbers brought the great mass of the indifferent, so that the faith became the fashion and was accepted as the religion of the State.

Centuries passed. Priests and Synods amended and invented. Legends arose; miracles, effected by old and new saints, were reported and recorded. Great collections of laws were compiled. All these reports, these legends of the saints, these compilations were added to the Holy Writ. The priests' corn was

in flower; its fragrance filled the warm summer day far and wide. Human ingenuity was constantly at work upon the ancient Holy Writ, which was itself as much forgotten as if they thought that no one would ever trouble about it again. In the end, time, human ingenuity and human ambition made a cold and unreal abstraction out of the good countryman, the brave hero who lived the life of a true and upright man: a man who cherished the pure and wonderful faith of a child, and died in lonely despair; an abstraction, that sat above the clouds ruling the world in a garment of stiff gold. Beside him sat his mother, almost greater than he was; his poor, foolish mother! around him, clad in robes of silk, bearing themselves with pride and dignity, stood the wise old peasants who had once gone barefoot with him over the sands.

The eternal might is perpetually at work, working among men as much as among the stars or on the ocean.

So it happened that among the German people a man arose: a true German, full of passionate sincerity and vigorous life, of native power and wide education. As he grew to manhood he sought to set his soul in its true relation to the eternal might. He cast into the mud the mass of stupid contradictions with which the priests had overlaid the Holy Writ, and sat down to study the Holy Writ itself. The trumpet tones of Paul, that strange apostle, rang out clear and full; he heard him only. He did not wholly understand his frenzied vehemence; he adapted what he said. He took as the kernel of his faith the words, "Man is just and pleasing in the sight of God through his faith in the death and merits of the son of God."

His piety and the courage with which he upheld his faith won for him half his countrymen. The northern part of Germany and the other Germanic races, in whose hands lies the future of the world, cast away the accursed collection of writings; their faith in the "Word of God," the "doctrine of the Church," as they called it, gave them a time of satisfaction.

It could not last; not more than three hundred years did their faith hold them.

The so-called "Word of God" or "doctrine of the Church" was founded on an error; it was internally false to history and to morality, in that it taught that the simple hero was merely the outward appearance which concealed the pres-

ence in the world of an heavenly eternally existent being, the son of God and the creator of the world. This error made the doctrine based upon it empty, hard and unreal. And the more empty and hard it grew the more it appealed to mediocrities, and the more it was regarded as immutable. Narrow-minded fools finally declared "The word of God and Luther's teaching shall never pass away."

And so in the course of the last two centuries the best minds of the nation, its greatest poets, thinkers and leaders, the young, the intellectual, the noble, the aspiring have turned away from this belief and the Church that represented it demanding that their Church should go before the people with a clarion voice leading them in the lofty path of freedom. The churches now stood in the road like two old market women in their broken carts, calling out to the people, or it went on and left them behind. It did go on! Who can name them all? Frederick the Great, Goethe, Helmholtz! . . . Greeting to you, our leaders!

The eternal might is ever busy in the thoughts of men.

Dissatisfied with the cold repulsive teaching of the Church, disturbed by the workings of the eternal in their souls, driving them to seek out God, a hundred and fifty years ago German men found courage and conviction to investigate the Holy Writ. They wanted to see whether the book were really a unity and infallible, as the Church maintained. It was a bold undertaking, but they declared, "We shall examine the book like any other."

For a hundred years a hundred good and true men of learning continued the investigation, and as they did so it became clearer and clearer that the "Holy Writ" contained many errors, religious and historical, and a mass of inconsistent beliefs: there was much that was noble in it, much that was bad, much that was narrow, much that was contradictory. It was like a garden, a wonderful, varied, disorderly book. The brave men pressed their way further and further into the garden; through the long, rank grass and the tall trees. Further and further they penetrated, anxiously and with reverent hearts, seeking for the Holyland, the bourne of the human spirit. . . . Ah! listen . . . from the midst of the wide garden, hidden away in the mysterious mass of the green bushes, there came, soft and clear, the exquisitely pure voice of a night-

ingale. It sang with intense and penetrating sweetness, ending on a note of quivering pain, of the love of the Almighty and the divine nature of man.

In the time of Luther there arose in many German hearts a new and passionate search for the word of God, a new love for Him; in our own day there has arisen a passionate and new love for the pure hero who was hidden away under so many strange disguises. It was a time of eager and joyful energy. For a hundred years the brave German scholars toiled, in spite of the scorn and contempt of obscurantists and the depreciation of the anxious, to try and break through the hedge of thorns behind which the hero has slept in concealment for two thousand years. Awake, true hero! awake! Gradually, since many good men and true aided in the work and assisted one another, we saw his soul; six or seven of the most important incidents in his life were established; he stood there, a man.

He was a man. There are proofs enough. First of all: He said so himself. Second: In his thought he was a child of his time. Third: His character is remarkable. Fourth: He developed. Fifth: His nature was not wholly free from evil. Sixth: He made mistakes: he did not return, and the Kingdom of Heaven did not come to pass. . . . He was a man. Wonderful as his goodness and wisdom and courage, neither in action nor in thought was he more than man. He was the fairest of the children of men.

And his beautiful human soul has given us this: faith in the divine dignity and lofty worth of every human soul; and, derived from this, faith in the goodness and nearness of the unknown eternal might; and, like good fruit from good soil, faith in the stern and beautiful tasks of humanity and its lofty destiny in the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus he brought to light the meaning and the worth of human life and gave it an eternal nobility.

We leave on one side all in him that was temporary, all that was mistaken; his belief in spirits, his miracles, his belief in his bodily resurrection and the immediacy of the Kingdom of Heaven. Even his morality, lofty as it is, cannot bind the children of a time so different from anything of which he could conceive.

We leave on one side all the doctrines which have been laid

down from the time of Paul and the Evangelists on concerning God and the Saviour.

We put away the mother of God and the Saints, the Pope and the Mass — away with them. God has had them judged and sentenced to death by German science.

We put away the Trinity and the Fall, the eternal son of God and the atonement by his blood and the resurrection of the body. Why should we believe such things? They cannot make us happier or better. And, moreover, what have such things to do with belief? They are questions of knowledge. Mistaken conceptions, German investigation has dismissed them once and for all. In their time they may have had a validity and a use for mankind; they may have served as a protecting frame for the precious picture of the Saviour; but they have no utility now. Away with the frame! Only ignorant men or hypocrites fix their eyes on it now. Saviour, how beautiful is thy picture! how simple and childlike thy faith!

Certainly thy faith had little visible basis, little outward success. Thy "Father in Heaven" let thee descend into the abyss of dark despair and had no mercy upon thee. And how did men treat thee? the men whose dignity thou heldst so high? Ah, but within thy soul had a prize beyond all estimation, precious in that high and lofty faith that made thee so joyful, set such a light in thine eyes, such strength and gentleness in thy heart! Thy faith made thee the brightest star in man's firmament.

Therefore let the unknown eternal power be what it may, let it do with us what it will; thy faith, thou fairest of the children of men, is our faith! And *this* is our faith: we feel and we believe that the hidden and eternal power is good and true and holy. We approach it with a trembling childlike love, we trust it, we rejoice in it, we draw close to it. And in this relation we find a deep and peaceful joy; it teaches us a reverence for our own soul and the souls of others, an eagerness of eye and hand in the cause of progress, a mind ready to help others and a joyous hopefulness for the future of humanity.

And this faith is ours, not because he who first held it was an eternal and wonderful being or because he had any such authority over us. What has authority to say in such questions? How can one soul be responsible for others? Each

soul must stand alone. It is ours because it corresponds to the highest elements in the soul. All my life long I have asked my soul, "My soul, you never cease to search for happiness. Tell me, then, my soul, what makes you calm and strong, gay and joyous?" And my soul replies, "The faith that the hero held. He was the true, the complete man, and therefore he discovered the true faith for man. Help me to hold it, eternal power, thou mysterious goodness, thou my Father."

Therefore rejoice, ye school children and teachers throughout the land. You have still to puzzle your brains over the stupid knowledge that is useless and harmful and has nothing to do with faith; but it will all come soon to the waste-paper basket. Rejoice, ye, too, shall rejoice in Jesus the carpenter, the wonderful stainless hero; ye, too, shall bring into your lives his lofty, childlike faith.

Rejoice, young manhood of the land! The Church is fighting against reason, the gift of God, and against the noble joy of living. Here is a faith which rejoices in every triumph of science, which is in harmony with the lofty spirit of Greece.

Rejoice, scholars and artists! You have stood, shaking your heads over the marvel which the Church had set down in the centre of man's path; you went round about it, not knowing where to begin. Now there stands in the path a fearful, simple child of man looking at you with deep and truthful eyes. The path of mankind is lofty indeed, but human.

Rejoice, preachers of both confessions, ye whose minds are free and lofty. Not for long shall ye be compelled to proclaim a senseless universe, a petty and unjust God, an unhistorically distorted Saviour. Instead, you may proclaim with shining eyes the life, the deeds, the faith of the pure and true hero; and speak with prophetic eyes and voice of the future of mankind, leading it on to the blessed kingdom of God.

Rejoice, O State! The Church has used thee indeed; made thee her servant and her scorn; deceived and robbed thee. She had grown swollen with her secrets; but German investigation has torn her secrets from her. Is she to contest the people any longer, to rule it, to hold it back? Now each man can hear with his own ears the exquisite song of the nightingale, and interpret it after his own fashion.

Rejoice, O Christendom! All seemed lost for thee in our time. Thou couldst not have conquered the world with the

"Pope" and the "Word of God." But China, India and Japan will turn to the pure hero and accept his faith. If they have souls like ours they will accept it, for it is adapted to the human heart; the heart needs it and opens out to it.

Rejoice, O my soul! Sit still a while and dream; rejoice! What light has been cast into the darkness of German thought! If the light hurts thee, my soul, thy eyes will grow accustomed to it, thou bird of the day! Dost thou see clear now? Dost thou see the land? Dost thou rejoice? What a Holyland! what a joyous future is before it! Sit still a while and look around and think. . . . Now, no more; now arise, and go about thy work thou joyful sad one, thou companion of God.

Heinke Boje sat by the table in her room, and read by the light of the lamp.

When the night came the thick mist of autumn rose up from the hollows and lay in grey, snakelike lines round the town of Hilligenlei; it glided into the streets to terrify men with its soundless advance, its pale coils, to fill the town over the tops of the houses, up to the roof of the tower, hiding away all light.

About midnight, when Heinke Boje had read to the end, she opened the window and looked out. When she perceived the void, cold, formless mass whirling there her heart contracted and she felt oppressed with fear. The uncertainty, the burden of human life, the awful isolation of every individual soul came upon her and tortured her. She wept in pity for herself and all men, and for him who was now making his lonely way through this cold, grey, formless mist. No love went with him; no companion shared his faith.

Then her thoughts turned to him of whom she had just read; to the strong pure man and his faith. And her faith rose up to meet his. She believed and prayed as he had believed and prayed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE first long letter from Kai Jans came three months later, as Heinke Boje was sitting at breakfast one morning with Peter Volquardsen's mother in East Holstein, the sparkling engagement ring on her finger. It came from Capetown. She rose and went up to her bedroom, and devoured the letter with eager eyes. The two travellers had gone ashore at Capetown, and now, after much laying of plans, had decided to travel through all the English Colonies as far as the Crocodile River. They meant to spend two years in doing this, and then, if possible, to go by land to the German Colonies in the West. The letter did not dwell upon this, but went on to talk of all kinds of personal experiences old and new, great and small, and the feelings which they had roused or the circumstances in which they had taken place, giving the reader a lively picture of the writer's mind. It was the letter of a man who had completed the act of renunciation and was going on his lonely way in silent courage. Once, only once, something in the turn of a phrase suggested the agonised sense of loss behind, but it was quickly covered up by a gay jest. She was overjoyed with the letter. She had been afraid he had turned away from her in bitterness, that he would write coldly and distantly, or speak of his suffering; instead, his letter breathed nothing but affection and courage; she could feel the affection and the courage in his grave and jesting words as she read the letter again and again with tears in her eyes. Then she sat down and wrote a long letter in reply, full of her joy and her warm friendship to him.

From this time on long friendly letters passed between them. At times there was deep longing in her thought of him; but generally she was calm like a man who has a rich possession in his hands and another far away which he knows is safe. She looked forward with childlike delight to the distant day of his return. That would be a delightful day! to have him sitting

at her table as her guest, such a dear guest! How she should spoil him, laugh at him, tease him and find out all his likes and dislikes.

One day she told him that she was now living with her friend; another time that she was expecting her first child; another that she had given birth to a boy. It was with deep joy, with a secret and fearful pride that she saw from his letters how deeply the news had affected him. She did desire passionately that he should continue to love her, always, always. She could not bear the thought that another woman might possess him and she be forgot. She told him in moving words how she prized the jewel of his love, and of her cherished hope that one day when they were both grown old and calm they might live next door to one another, "and then every morning one of the children shall bring you a flower to say good morning! and every evening you shall sit with us in the light of our lamp." He took up the idea in his answer and elaborated it half in jest and half in earnest, so movingly that she sobbed aloud.

Three and a half years went by. She lived in perfect harmony and happiness with her husband, rejoicing with him in the child now able to run from one parent to the other and gaze with intelligent eyes at the pictures his father showed him; and expected her second child.

Just about this time the newspapers published the first reports of that rising in our colony which was to cost us so many noble lives. They were in no anxiety about the travelling, however, since he had said in his last letter that the high prices and the unsuitable time of year had decided them against going by land; they intended to go *via* Capetown. But when no further news came for ten weeks they began to be uneasy.

At last a letter came. His friend wrote from Windhook to the "friend of his dear friend." "We decided, after all, on finding that we could accompany a party of Boers to go with waggons through Griqua and Namaqualand. We arrived safely and intended to part from the Boers in order to look at some of the farms. In the night a colonist came to our camp fire, on foot, a fugitive, declaring that he had been attacked and his wife and three children were wandering there in the bush. Kai Jans and I immediately left the Boers and, under cover of the darkness, made our way with the fugitive to

his dwelling; after some search we found his wife and children in the bush; and then made our way north, marching night and day, on foot, over the parched and burning sand and rock, often perishing of thirst, always in danger of our lives. During the march our friend underwent a great strain; as you know since he was a sailor on the *Clara* his heart and lungs have not been very strong, and, during our flight, even when we others had the watch, his imagination kept him from sleeping. All the time he was always ready to carry the youngest child, a stout little beggar who was always crying. Finally when we reached Rehoboth in comparative safety he fell seriously ill of pneumonia. The attack was sharp and short; he is now practically recovered, but the doctor cannot say anything definitely until it appears how far his heart has been affected. I took advantage of the first opportunity of coming with him to Windhook, where we now are, and as soon as the doctor recommends I shall bring him back to Germany, trusting that your care and his native air may bring him back to health.

"You will pardon my freedom in saying to you that since the beginning of our journey I have known, although my friend breathed no word upon the subject, that he had some heavy sorrow; his behaviour revealed to me what his lips did not. Ordinarily he was as you know him: keenly observant, deeply interested in the conditions of the unknown country, friendly and sympathetic to all. But when he was alone and thought himself unobserved I used often to find him in a strange state of mind; sometimes he seemed quite broken, there was a silent anguish on his face like that of a man whose hopes are all shattered; sometimes, again, his eyes shone with an abstracted expression as if in his mind's eye he saw his beloved smiling to him from afar. I did not know what caused such varied moods in him, and yet I had long felt certain that both the mood of despair and of joy was connected with you; for whenever he spoke of his youth and his home he ended by speaking of you.

"It was the first day in Rehoboth, late in the afternoon, that he spoke to me. He felt that a serious illness was coming upon him, and while he tried hastily to write a letter to you the fever made his hand so unsteady that he had to throw away the pen. Then he said to me in a tone of utter despondency that in his life he had endured much, he had fought against and

conquered powerful spirit shapes, but one thing he could not overcome: the knowledge that he had lost you, and lost you through his own folly.

"I am a reserved and almost cold man; he told me that he chose me for his friend because I calmed the passion of his blood. I told him that such a feeling might well grow to something overwhelming if he allowed himself to feed it daily on the longings of a lively imagination. He replied that he had known you from his childhood, and, although he was not blind to your faults, which were the faults of your family, you had stood by him from your childhood for all that was dear and beautiful and pure in life.

"I need tell you no more of his illness except this: in his wandering he was always comforting a child, whom he carried through sand and bush; but it was not that child, but yours. In the strange confusion of disease he was carrying it to you, toiling over wide plains and over exhausting roads, you stood in the distance, looking across to him and scolding him for making such slow progress.

"I found some notes in the diary which he handed over to me, which I enclose. First, some notes on the life of the Saviour, modifications of certain crudities of style and matter. The rest deals with his relations to you. No doubt with the idea of always having to hand thoughts that could console and strengthen him in his sorrow he put down some considerations which could help him. 'God did not let her belong to me because He wished to shield me and her from exceeding sorrow; for I shall die soon. . . . I alone suffer; through my renunciation they, too, live in peace. . . . I must live and be of good courage to be a helper to her if sorrow ever comes upon her. . . . How often a poor rejected lover has no friendly word from the woman he loves; but every letter shows me that I am dear to her. . . . I will believe that there is a good end attained by my sorrow; it will make me a better and deeper man, and therefore I must not despair. . . . I will think of the days to come when we are old, when I may be able to endure to see her, even to find joy in it. . . . If she had been my wife, every heart beat, every pang in my shoulder would have tortured me with the fear of a long illness or death; now I am at all times ready for whatever the eternal power may send, be it health or sickness or death.'

"I am writing this and sending it by the mail that goes the day after to-morrow in order that you may write to him whatever you think fit, or if I cable you in the course of a week that I am bringing him home you may be fully informed as to his condition."

So ran the friend's letter. Three weeks later came the cable, "Jans, May 21, Hamburg."

Early in the morning of the 21st of May the two who had stood nearest to him from his childhood started off for Hamburg, Heinke Volquardsen and Lau, the corn-dealer.

On their arrival at the inn Pe Ontjes went down to the harbour and saw the steamer slowly sailing up the Elbe. He ran to the African quay, reaching it almost at the moment of the steamer's arrival, and went on board. He asked for the doctor and enquired of him whether Jans were on board and how he was. The young doctor replied that the sea voyage had done his lung great good; it was in fact almost well again; but the condition of his heart left a great deal to be desired. It was possible that he might recover his strength, and treatment at some sanatorium might effect a complete cure; it was also possible that any day might bring the end. He would go down and announce the visitor.

Lau went in and found him alone. As he lay on his back his emaciated appearance shocked Lau, although he concealed it. He sat down on the chair by the bed and held his hand in his.

"It's like Cape Horn," said Kai Jans, his eyes shining.

"Very like!" said Lau. "They all send their love to you. First your father."

"How is the old man?" said Kai Jans, smiling as he thought of the letters he had had from him, the quaint humour with which he spoke of the doings of Hilligenlei, the enthusiastic language of his political and religious aspirations.

"He's all right," said Lau; "he has his interest from the Hindorf Savings Bank and his pension, and now and then he earns a trifle; and altogether he has a shilling a day. He has got a little smaller and a little thinner since you saw him last, but I can tell you there's nothing more magnificent in Hilligenlei than to see him sitting there, with his cap well over his head and his eyes sparkling under the brim, puffing away at

his short pipe. I often tell Anna, 'You and Thomas Jans in your different ways are the *noblesse* of Hilligenlei.' He reads the *Labour Leader* as he used, and still belongs to the party. But he's not a whole-hearted adherent; he can't give up the Bible . . . he can't get away from the lightship, so to speak, on which he used to brood and read the Bible in his young days."

"And how are Anna and the children?"

Pe Ontjes Lau gave a curious smile. "Well," he said, "the children and I know her humours now, and so we get on very well on the whole. Of course, she worries because her husband is not the richest and most learned man in Hilligenlei and hasn't got the best position — and, indeed, she might demand as much of God — and because her children are not first at school. The girl is quick and bright like herself; but the boy is slow like me. We have something to bear, Kai, and perhaps we always shall have; her nature somehow seems never to have been smoothed off or finished. But you have helped us. Four years ago, when she read the life of the Saviour that you gave to Heinke, she was much softer and gentler and less unjust for a while. The other day the boy came into my writing-room and stood close by me for a time playing with the ruler, and then said, in a kind of offhand way, 'Father, mother has been so sharp and so cross to-day and yesterday . . . do you know . . . you must talk about the life of the Saviour this evening. Perhaps she will read it again.'"

Kai Jans smiled. "But you are happy?"

"Of course we are," said Pe Ontjes. "The whole trouble, hers and ours, is that she loves us beyond reason."

"And Pete?"

"Oh — Pete. Pete has only one idea — getting on — getting on. It does not make him happy, but there seems no room for anything else in him. He has married a German-American like himself. We see nothing of her."

Kai Jans lay still awhile, thinking of the friend of his youth with half-closed eyes. Then his thoughts passed to Tjark Dusenschön, and he asked about him.

"He is here in Hamburg, and is said to have a good position in some private business — something in the undertaking line, I imagine. Don't be afraid; a man like that never goes under."

Kai Jans was silent and lay still for awhile, rather ex-

hausted. Pe Ontjes sat by his side. Then, rousing himself again, he said, "Have you any other message for me?"

"Heinke is here, Kai."

"Is she coming?" he said softly. Then, suddenly, in spite of his efforts to control himself, he began to weep passionately, and said between his sobs, "Dear Pe, I am no coward, but I am still weak from my illness."

"I know, my boy. . . . I know. . . . Weep if it eases you."

"I haven't wept since that day on the *Gude Wife*."

"I know, my boy. . . . You don't need to be ashamed; there's reason enough for it."

"There is nothing so hard in life," said Kai Jans, "as to have to avoid what is more precious to one than everything in the world."

"Yes, my boy; I can understand."

"I have fought against it; you can believe that. But often when I was so alone, so utterly alone, and used to think how dear she is and hear her sweet voice and see her dear, bright eyes, then despair seemed to take hold of me. Oh, Pe Ontjes, what has one in the world . . . how poor the man is who loves and has to avoid her he loves."

"I think, Kai, it will be easier now," said the great Pe Ontjes sympathetically. "You will grow accustomed to seeing her now and then, and then you will be more at rest."

He became calmer. "Yes," he said, "since it has to be I ought to be glad that she and her husband are my friends. I will learn to rejoice in her happiness." He passed his hand across his eyes and lay still. "It is possible," he said, "that I shall not live much longer; then there will be an end of all trouble."

"Oh," said Pe Ontjes, "don't talk like that. You will go to Wiesbaden or Nauheim and get well again; and when you are a strong man again you can do the work you describe in the life of the Saviour."

"Yes," he said, "perhaps. There is a great deal I want to do. Only, Pe Ontjes . . . it is too deep. I have known her so long — since she was a child. God let her grow up before my eyes; let her grow beautiful and clever and dear, so dear; and said to me, 'Look how she grows and blooms; one day

she shall make a strong and good man of you. . . .' And now . . . it is hard to bear."

A step was heard outside and a woman's voice.

"I told her to follow me if I did not return. I think that is she. . . . Courage, my boy! I will wait on board. I only wanted to tell you that she is expecting her second child. . . . Now, be brave and calm." He went out at the door and she came in.

She went straight up to his bed and began to stroke his hands. Although she had made up her mind to remain perfectly calm, she began to weep as she stroked his hands, and said, "Dear, dear boy. . . . Heinke is here . . . only say what can she do for you. Tell me, what can I do?"

He looked up at her with beaming eyes. "Be good to me, as you are," he said. "It makes me too happy to have you so. . . . Are they good to you?"

"Who, Kai? Peter Volquardsen? He is just what he always was, Kai . . . the same dear, splendid person that he always was."

"Then all is well," he said. "It has not been in vain."

"No," she said, "not in vain. You have saved one human soul from misery, and another from the pangs of conscience. Not in vain! But you must be brave; what is the use, if you are not brave and gay?" She bent over his hand and pressed it against her face, weeping bitterly as she said, "If you cannot bear it and your love for me ruins you — that I could not bear. All my happiness would vanish."

He nodded to her. "I have been brave always; haven't I written you good letters always? I will fight it out; you shall see."

She pushed back the hair from his forehead and temples and looked at him with affectionately tearful eyes. "And in the summer holidays, if you are in Wiesbaden and we can save enough, we will come and see you. I shall still be able to travel then. Then I will sit with you all day. And in the autumn you must come to Hilligenlei. You are to live with Anna — did you know that?"

"Afterwards I shall live in Hamburg," he said. "I agreed on that with my friend. I shall do all sorts of things there, and then . . ."

"Then you will come to Hilligenlei from time to time, and

we shall be ever so glad. You shall just see how glad we shall be!"

"Then when your children are bigger," he said with happy eyes, "you must bring them to Hamburg and I will show you everything. And as I get older I can come and sit with you and see you busy in your house, and talk over old times with you."

"And then," she said, with merry eyes, "then we shall get quite old, and you will come every day and we shall discuss the state of your health." And she began to talk in the high, piping voice of quite an old woman that came strangely from her fresh, laughing face and her shining young eyes.

He looked at her with happy eyes. "Are you the same to everybody that you are to me?"

"Oh, no," she said; "the Bojes are not like that. Only to my own people and you. Oh, you must see the little boy. . . . I really wanted to bring him with me. But it is better as it is. I wanted to be the old Heinke Boje when I came."

"The old Heinke Boje," he sighed.

"Your dearest friend," she said, "who would do anything for you — anything. Kai, you must never be lonely. My husband told me to tell you that you are never to be lonely."

"You dear people," said he. "Tell me about him and about your life."

She began to tell him and he listened for a while. Then his eyes grew gradually heavy.

The doctor came in. He went up to the bed and said, "I have decided to take you to the hospital this afternoon. Since you have had all sorts of excitement to-day, and since you have to move, I propose that you do not see your friends again until to-morrow morning . . . in the hospital. Do you agree?"

Kai Jans nodded and the doctor turned to go.

Heinke bent down over him quickly and said in a low voice, with tears streaming from her eyes, "Dear, precious one," and went out.

It was the last time they saw each other.

Late in the afternoon he was moved into the harbour hospital, and lay there exhausted by the moving, but at peace.

Towards evening a young Hamburg clergyman came to see him, who had been devoted to him for years, and had heard of his being there through a chance meeting with the doctor. He,

like other friends, had read the manuscript life of the Saviour, which had been copied and passed from hand to hand, and he now asked whether he intended to publish it. He replied that he should wait a year; he wanted to read it through first. His young friend then asked him whether he dreaded publication.

"No," he said, "why should I dread it? I know that my Saviour and my gospel are truer than those taught by the Church. Even if I stood quite alone why should I be afraid? One need not be afraid to be alone with truth. . . . Of course, people will say, 'Look how wildly he talks as soon as he has given up orders,' but that is not the explanation; it was only that before I did not see things clearly. I was still under the ban of doctrine, like most of my brethren; it only came to me slowly and painfully. How I have brooded all my life, what fears I have had!" After a pause he said, "But I have fought my way out of the confusion; I have not wriggled and twisted out like an eel; and that is why I am happy now and ready to die or live as God wills it."

After another silence, during which his friend turned over the leaves of the New Testament that lay on the table by his bed, he said, as if to himself, "And it is better so."

"What is better so?" asked his friend.

He made no reply. He only said in a low, weary voice — he had heard the rustling of the leaves — "Read me something aloud — about Him."

He read some sentences from the Sermon on the Mount and some of the parables, just where he happened to open the book.

After a pause he awoke from his dreams and said, "Teachers ought to be good to all children."

"Why do you say that?" said his friend.

"One must be good to children," he said. "They cannot defend themselves. And, perhaps, they cannot tell, the boy who is to bring the final knowledge is sitting at their feet, or the girl who is to be his mother, tortured by strange, dreamlike thoughts."

His friend said, "Quite a number of professors are trying to teach people the new knowledge. They write well."

He smiled. "Their task is hard enough. God bless German science! I thought badly enough of it at one time; but we owe it a great debt."

His friend said, "If your life of the Saviour is published, many, many people who have fallen away from the doctrines of the Church, and lost all faith thereby, will be able to feel themselves Christians again. They will be able to accept the Gospel, and that will be a great gain in their lives and hereafter."

He seemed not to have heard. After a time he said, "It will not be light until we have got rid of all our confused notions, of the Pope and the atonement by His blood, and all the other stupid errors, and have the simple gospel instead. His yoke is easy and His burden is light."

He folded his hands painfully and lay still for a time. Then he said in a clear voice, "I have seen Hilligenlei once—in a dream . . . it was unspeakably beautiful." He seemed to sleep.

His friend sat for a time beside the bed, reading in the New Testament, and then went softly out.

The next morning they found Kai Jans dead. The examination proved that he had died of syncope about midnight, apparently without any struggle.

When Pe Ontjes reached the hospital about nine next morning he learned that the end had come, and he went back to the inn to Heinke in deep depression. She was still in her room.

When he told her she seemed at first like one turned to stone. When she understood and it suddenly dawned upon her, "He is gone—gone out of my life," she wept bitterly and stretched out her hand to him like a child whose favourite plaything has been taken away.

Once again a Boje sat upon the edge of her bed and would not be comforted.

Pe Ontjes said what he could. "Did you love him so?" he said. "And do you love your husband as much?" Then in genuine astonishment he said, "You Bojes are strange people! . . . But now you mustn't cry any more. Get up and come with me. We must telegraph and see about the funeral."

"Not in Hamburg," said she.

"I should think not," said he. "In Hindorf. That's where his people come from. That's where his father lived as a young man. And he himself took duty there for two years."

"Yes," she said, "I often go and see the dear people at the vicarage, where we two used to be like their own children."

She rose and wiped her bright eyes and smoothed down her dress, sobbing afresh as she said, "I can't go out like this; I must have a black dress."

He smiled in the midst of his grief.

"We can buy one here, Heinke," he said, stroking her hair. "Come now."

They drove to the hospital. On the way he tried to persuade her not to see the dead. "I have seen him," he said, "and I can tell you that his face is quiet and peaceful. Be content with that."

When they were leaving the building who should come towards them but Tjark Dusenschön. He was clad in the deepest mourning, with a shiny tall hat and umbrella. An expression of profound seriousness on his round, clean-shaven face, he came towards them, and after shaking hands said, "I have heard that Kai Jans is dead . . ." he swallowed down his tears. . . . "The body is to go to Hilligenlei?"

"To Hindorf."

"I am at the head of the undertaking firm of Holy Trinity, of which I am the founder. If you will entrust to me the execution of this melancholy commission, I can ensure that everything will be carried out to your satisfaction. . . . We have three classes . . ." he drew a price list out of his pocket.

"Medium," said Pe Ontjes, curtly and quickly.

"Coffin, pall . . ."

"I will be there to superintend," said Pe Ontjes.

". . . and conveyance to Hilligenlei Station, thirteen pounds."

"Agreed," said Pe Ontjes. "We can go now, Heinke."

Two days later Kai Jans lay on his bier in the hospital mortuary, unchanged, wrapped in the white pall which Tjark Dusenschön had provided. Pe Ontjes had stood by and seen everything done. The bearers came in.

Tjark Dusenschön came in in his elegant frock coat, his shiny black hat in his hand, and, standing at the head of the bier, uttered an "Our Father," as prescribed by the constitution of the Holy Trinity.

The coffin was closed and carried out.

Outside, when the hearse had already started and Pe Ontjes

was just getting into the carriage beside Heinke, Tjark Dunsenschön came up to say farewell, and said, with a melancholy shake of his head, "It's a pity that he never came to anything . . . he was such a gifted fellow. But . . . you know . . . he had no class feeling. That was what it was. He always remained the workman, the country boy. He never rose . . . that was his failing."

Pe Ontjes said nothing. He was eager to be away from the town and at home again. He kept leaning out of the window, watching the hearse in front making its way through the press of traffic, the noise, and ringing of bells.

When they reached the station at Hilligenlei they found there twenty or thirty people clad in mourning, people that they knew; eight Hindorf workmen took the coffin, four on each side, fair beards to the right, red to the left, and raised it on to their shoulders.

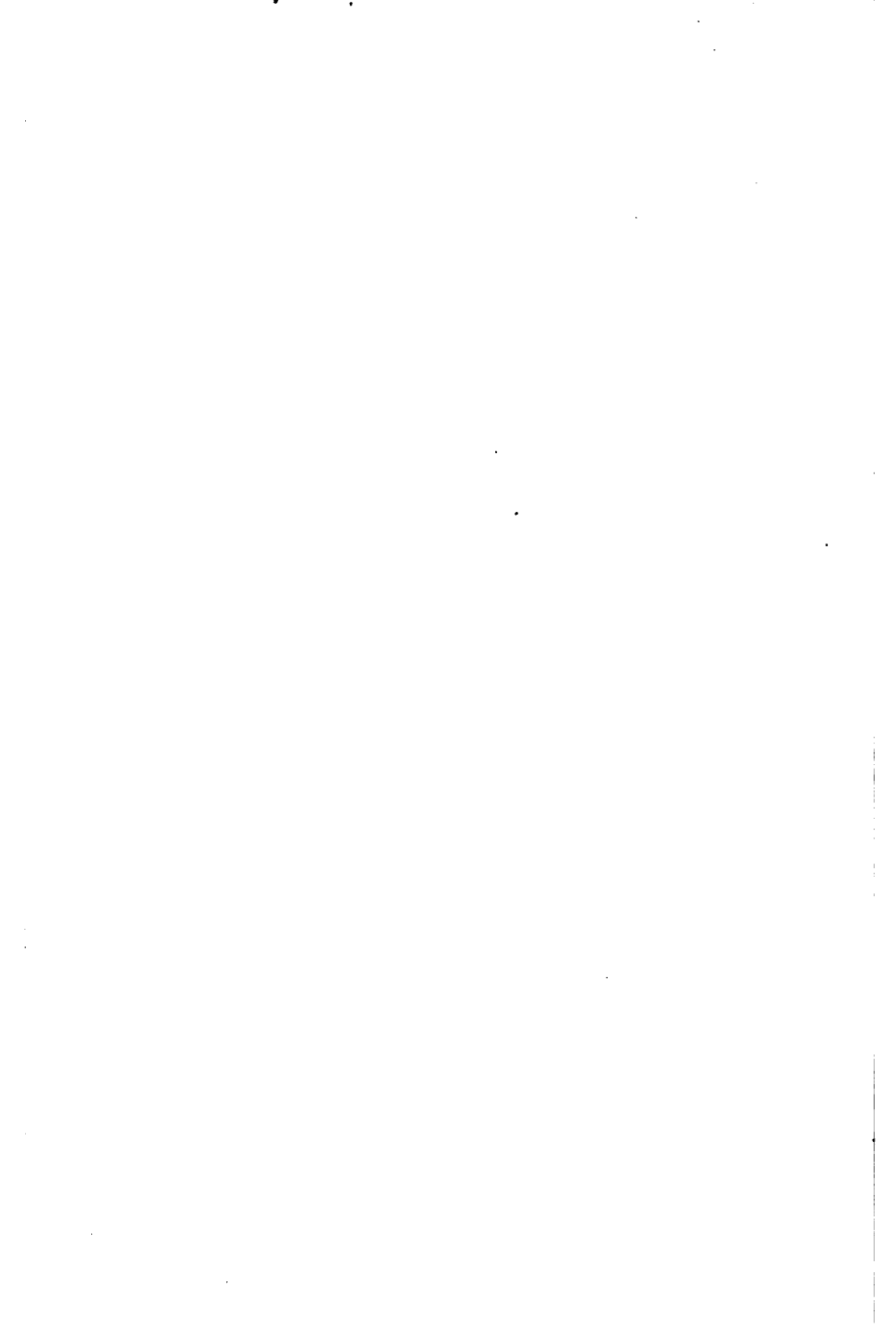
Then Pe Ontjes drew a deep breath. "Thank God!" he said. At last he seemed to feel him saved from all the sorrows and troubles of life.

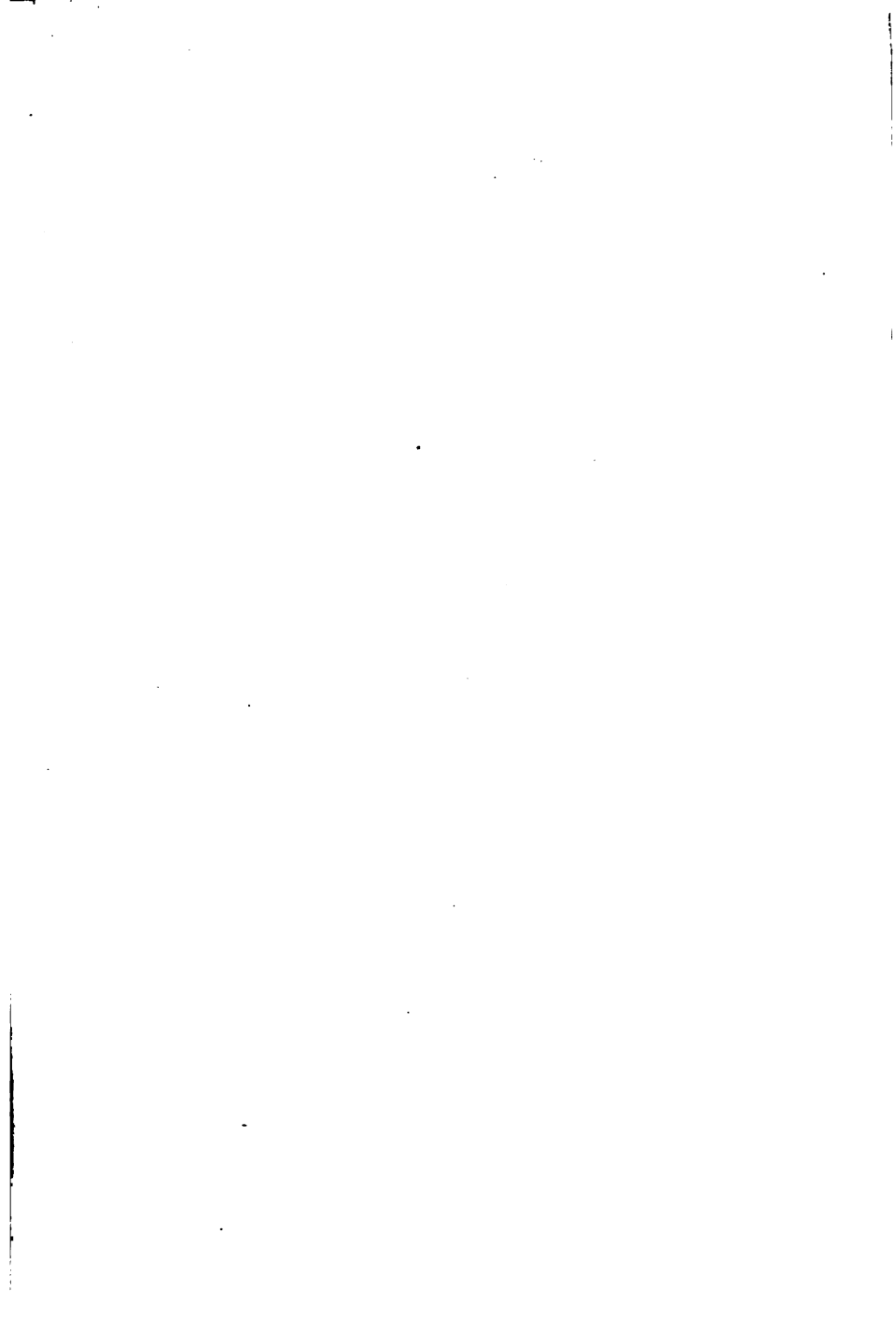
The little old man stood in front of his door, in front of the long house, waiting for the procession. He gave a long look at the coffin and his mouth quivered. Then he pressed his cap over his eyes and silently joined the train. The mighty Pe Ontjes went by his side.

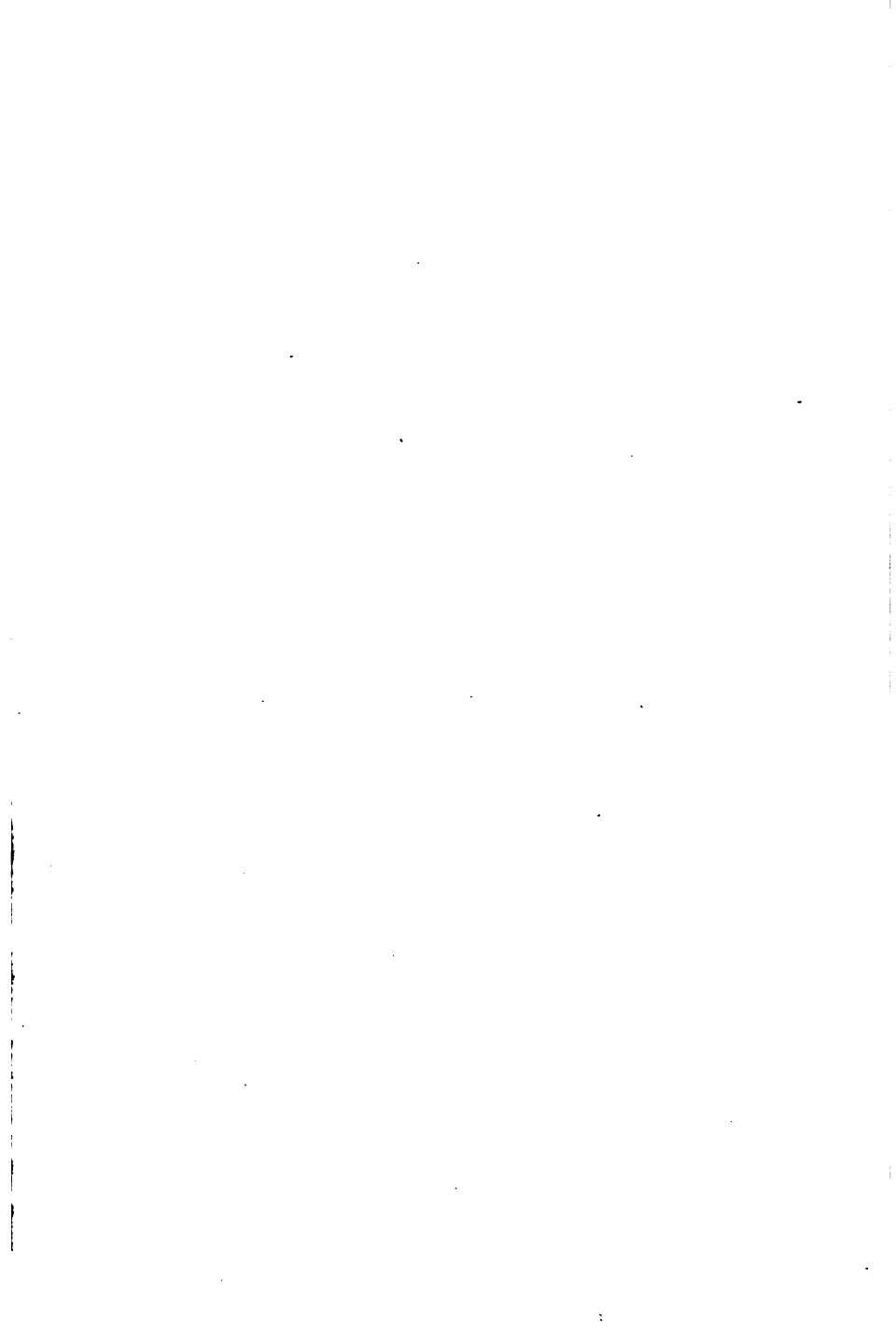
Heinke and Anna, who had been with the old man, looked out from the window. The custom for women to go to funerals is only finding its way very gradually here.

What more is there to say? The warm, heavy May rain fell into his open grave. New corn is springing up. Men will grow up to care for the highest in humanity, to fight for it in deed and thought.

THE END.







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